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Healing Through Worship

2034

Highway to Healing

by

Dr. Harry Hutchison

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A DOCTOR'S VIEW

IN *Highway to Healing* we have an excellent and inspiring guide to Divine Healing. The author, Dr. H. Hutchison, an experienced minister of religion, shows deep insight into physical and mental suffering. He reminds us first of the two-fold commission of Our Lord to His Church-to-be, when "He gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases. And He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick" (Luke 9 v. 1 & 2). Afterwards He commissioned other seventy to do likewise: and finally, according to St. Mark, during His last Resurrection appearance to the eleven, He promised that "they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover", this being a sign following acceptance of the preaching of the Gospel.

In the first part of his book, Dr. Hutchison has, in his "Steps to Healing", opened up for us the illimitable treasure store of spiritual 'aids' which the Christian Church possesses and freely offers. Positive Living, Perfect Loving, Worship, Prayer, the Sacraments, Meditation—these are some of the dynamic spiritual forces shown to be powerful means of maintaining and restoring wholeness. He says (and how truly) in regard to Prayer, "We reinforce the self-recuperative powers of our body in so far as we make the relationship between God and ourselves real".

In the second part of the book, the twenty-five Healing Services are of rare quality and will prove of inestimable value and comfort to individuals, intercessors and meditation groups as also to clergymen and to medical and nursing personnel who seek wholeness (or Holiness) for themselves and for those whom they serve.

I recommend this very excellent book.

J. H. THOMPSON, M.A., M.B., Ch.B.

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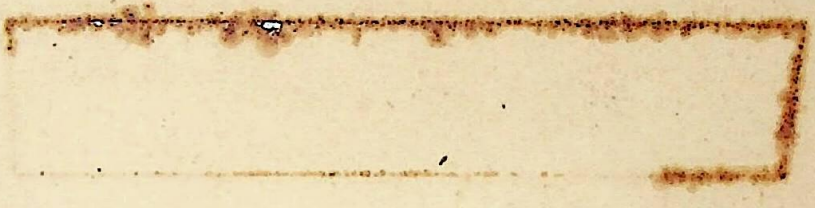

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HIGHWAY TO HEALING

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By the same author

THE CHURCH AND SPIRITUAL HEALING
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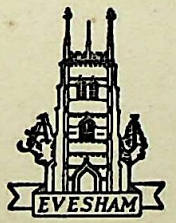
HIGHWAY TO HEALING

A Practical Approach to Personal Healing

by

HARRY HUTCHISON
M.A., B.D., Ph.D.



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To

CATHERINE and JOHN ROSS

who first awakened my interest in
Spiritual Healing

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

THE purpose of this little volume cannot be better put than in the words of the title page: it is intended to be "A Practical Approach to Personal Healing". In a previous book, *The Church and Spiritual Healing*, I attempted to set out my whole philosophy of Spiritual Healing, and this task I do not attempt again here—though it is true that the elements of it are implied in the Steps to Healing which I try to set out, simply and practically, in the first part of this book.

Nowadays, in the field of spiritual healing, we tend to focus most of our attention on the work of "faith-healers" or on what other people can do (through Christ, of course) for individual sufferers. But I am more and more convinced, as the months pass, that sufferers could frequently *put themselves* in the position of *not needing* the help of various outside agencies; and it is largely in answer to a growing awareness of the possibility of "self-help" that this book has been written. "What can I myself do to assist my healing?" the sufferer asks. This simple exposition of how to approach the subject of self-healing through worship, together with its twenty-five Healing Services, is an attempt to answer this question.

A book of case-histories has a value not to be underestimated; and there are many of these on the market today. A philosophical treatment of the subject is at the other extreme; and it too is valuable for an understanding of this vital theme. But there are few books of practical devotion, written specifically for individual sufferers: and this book attempts to fill such a need. It can be used

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by sufferers in their homes, or in hospital; by prayer circles and by those taking part in healing services—in fact, by anyone who is anxious to get well, or is anxious to see someone else get well. I send it out with all its imperfections, and with a prayer that it may be used of the Great Physician Himself to bring wholeness to many who are sick.

My debt of gratitude to my wife, Sheila Hutchison, M.A., who carefully read the typescript and proofs, is very considerable; and I would also thank the publisher of this volume for sympathetic and helpful co-operation at all times.

HARRY HUTCHISON

Crosshill-Victoria Manse,
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1956

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A DOCTOR'S VIEW

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As a member of the medical profession, and more particularly as a Christian psychiatrist, for whom the whole man or total personality must always be the subject of diagnosis and treatment, I long to see a revolution in medical thinking, whereby, using all proper medical, surgical and psychiatric means in their legitimate place, we could bring ourselves to realise and use the healing power of the Holy Spirit within the patient and recognise the miraculous restorative power of Prayer and Meditation. We need to pray for God's blessing to bring about a much closer link between the Church and the medical profession. Indeed a Christian people might reasonably expect and demand, at this stage in our development, the institution of a new "Faculty" of Priest-doctor—doubly trained personnel who would inevitably become spiritual leaven in the Church, the Medical Sciences and in Society. I sincerely believe that new life would be transfused into Christianity by this great act of obedience to our Lord.

In recommending this very excellent work of Dr. Hutchison's, I would commend to us the words of a psychologist, Cyril Valentine, who in *Modern Psychology and the Validity of Christian Experience* says, "Psychology stands for the perfection of manhood, Religion stands for communion with God. But communion with God implies perfection of manhood. Psychology and Religion are therefore complementary. Our discipline for the understanding of the Divine must be such a development and integration of personality that we shall become conformable to the perfect and sinless Person of Christ."

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PART II

TWENTY-FIVE HEALING SERVICES FOR PRIVATE DEVOTION

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PART I

A Practical Approach to Personal Healing

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CHAPTER I

SIGNPOSTS TO HEALING

Christ and History

No fact has been of more importance in the whole of human history than the fact of Christ. Men may argue about Him, they may refuse to face His challenge, they may scorn His benefits; but there is no intelligent man alive who can live as though Christ had never come on this earth of ours. He is the "Light that lighteth *every* man that cometh into the world", whether men like it or not.

Yet we cannot deny that men may often be blind to some of that Light. They may accept Christ as *a* figure of history but reject Him as *the* Figure of history. They may see Him as, in some sense, the Son of Man, but may deny Him as the Son of God with power. They may even believe in His power to redeem the soul, and deny His power to heal the body and mind.

This last error has been nothing less than tragic throughout many centuries. Somehow, many Christians have got hold of the idea that the Gospel is purely a "spiritual Gospel", and that its message is exclusively for the soul of man. There are even those who think the healing stories of the New Testament are an insignificant part of the whole Gospel, or at least that they are there simply to make us believe more easily in His power to save our souls! They do that too, of course; but they are there, surely, because they truly report what the Lord of Life *did* do

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for men's bodies and minds, and to serve as a basis of hope for similar works *today*.

"We cannot read the New Testament," says one writer, "without realising that healing was inseparable from the life of Jesus. It must therefore be the concern of those who follow Him."[1] Yet the sad truth is that people *have* separated healing from the life of Jesus. They have come to think of His Word as a Word of hope for the next life only, instead of as a Word of power for this life as well. And this is a question which the present reader might well ask himself.

The evidence of the Bible, of course, is too obvious for any thinking man to doubt. Healing was not intended to be a mere extra, but an integral part of the Church's work. And so it was, for two or three centuries. I have already shown, at some length, in my previous book, how solidly the Healing Ministry is based on Christ's own teaching; and I need only offer a brief and simple summary here. How, in the first place, did the disciples come to believe in healing? Certainly not by chance. Had Christ not definitely linked healing and preaching, I, for one, am sure they would never have thought of healing.

And so today. Would men bother to heal without the belief that it was Christ's Commission? Could *you* and *I* believe that healing could come to us through accepting His Word of Truth, if He Himself hadn't specifically promised it? I couldn't. To the readers of this book I say this: that every time the Bible records Christ's Commission for the disciples to preach *and* to heal, He is really telling us also that *our* response to His Word is intimately linked with any healing we may be hoping for in our bodies or minds. No man can accept the Good News without feeling better. I myself have found that to read such passages as Mark vi. 7, 13, or Matthew x. 1, 7, 8, or

[1] *New Concepts of Healing*, A. G. Ikin, p. 38.

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Luke ix. 1, 2, 6, in this light, is in itself to evoke faith in the possibility of greater physical and mental well-being.

Of course, there are still the "cranks" (or should we call them the over-cautious?) who say that Christ just meant healing to go hand-in-hand with preaching in the early age of the Church, or who claim His healings as passing signs and wonders. I have had several letters along these lines. One points out that there are only about half a dozen healing miracles in the whole book of Acts—which is true, if we count only those related in detail. But how many hundreds more are included in such a phrase as "many signs and wonders were performed . . ."!? The Bible itself says that the story of Christ's life and deeds is merely a selection; and that is equally true of the Early Church as a whole.

Certainly there are few things which hinder the work of healing (whether healing others, or self-healing through worship) than this unwarranted hesitancy about taking the Bible at its word. Man still has the same opportunity of claiming his kinship with his Father as those in early days, and finding this to be indeed a healing relationship. "The Kingdom of God is within you." If men could only believe this to begin with, perhaps their marvelling when healing miracles do occur would change to a humble but joyful acceptance of an order of things which was meant to be *normal*. (Cf. Acts iii. 12.)

Someone has said that "as the two aspects of His ministry (preaching and healing) could not be separated in His own life, so they were not to be separated in the Christian Church". And we can add, "Nor were they to be separated in us." To accept the Gospel which brings us into fellowship with God is, at the same time, to accept the promise of healing which the same God offers through that fellowship. Yet how many people today, and for many centuries, have cut across that Gospel by believing in sickness as God's

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will? God can indeed *use* evil in all its forms, but which unbiased reader of the Gospels can maintain that Christ did not resist sickness with all His power?

Jesus healed people in New Testament times—and in the succeeding centuries—"not in order to make them so grateful to Him that they would become His followers, but simply because they were ill, and God's will for them was that they should be well. If sickness were God's will, Jesus would never have healed a single soul or body".[1] If the reader of this book starts out with nothing else, let him at least start out with the firm conviction that God's will is health.

It is true that history has never been without some witness to the healing power of Christ, or that no century does not bring its isolated stories of miracles done in His Name. But today, as never before, there are signs that Christ's own challenge and commission are being taken really seriously. It may be that when the story of the twentieth century is written, it may tell of this great rediscovery of Christ's power to heal as well as to save. One thing is sure: the challenge to each of *us* to make this rediscovery is very strong indeed.

Christ DOES Heal Today

"Many more people are now taking the possibility of Christ's capacity to heal today and not just two thousand years ago seriously, and trying to find the conditions that enable Him to break through the barriers of unbelief and the shackles of centuries of wrong thinking and living which hamper that fullness of life." So writes one who has seen that Christ heals today.[2]

Such a statement is one of dozens which have appeared during the last few years, when, for the first time, we are

[1] *Healing Prayer*, W. Portsmouth, p. 26.
[2] *New Concepts of Healing*, p. 9.

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able to read for ourselves hundreds upon hundreds of classified cures through the power of Christ. This evidence of Christ's power to heal today is no longer able to be questioned. And yet—for lack of honest weighing up of the facts, or perhaps for refusal to read the facts at all—men still *do* question. As I myself have said elsewhere, I believe men may still rightly argue over the *scope* of spiritual healing, but not over the *fact* of spiritual healing.

Let us think, for the sake of convenience, of those diseases which Christ healed nearly two thousand years ago, and let us notice that practically every one has been paralleled today. For instance, there are the diseases of sense and speech, which took up so much of His time during His earthly ministry (e.g. Matt. ix. 32, xii. 22). Mrs. Salmon writes, quoting a letter received from a patient: "I have only had one treatment and have never felt so well in all my life. It is now two months since you treated me, and I have not worn my glasses since, although I had been wearing them for eighteen years. I was deaf in one ear, and part of my face was completely paralysed after nine sinus operations. Both sight and hearing have now been restored, and the life has returned to my face—by the grace of our Lord."[1]

Again she writes: "A child of four years, although born perfectly normal, had been dumb for a long period. It was thought his native nursemaid had frightened him with a frog. He had been taken to doctors but no improvement had been noticed in his condition. He was then brought for Divine Healing. One treatment was given, and on the way home, about fifteen minutes later, he began talking quite normally and has done so ever since."[2]

I am aware, of course, that some people might explain these cures psychologically, or even admit that functional

[1] *He Heals Today*, E. H. Salmon, p. 67.
[2] *He Heals Today*, p. 76.

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diseases *can* be cured spiritually. Yet, apart from the fact that it has been shown functional troubles are often more difficult to cure than organic ones, nothing can explain away the fact that it took the power of Christ to do the healing. Often the most difficult part of a healing is just this removal of the barriers between the patient and the healing energies of God (or nature). And this is so often and so wonderfully achieved in spiritual healing.

* * *

Skin afflictions are another class of disease which occupied Christ, and again we find many modern parallels (and again the same attempts to explain them away on psychological grounds!). Mark i. 40 is an example from the New Testament, and we can quote a brief account given from the healer already quoted above. "For two years one man had suffered from dermatitis. The whole of his body, from head to toe, had completely skinned twice. The irritation was unbearable and he dared not even take a bath. He had tried many doctors and specialists and treatments of all kinds, but there was no improvement. He attended three healing services and reported, with deep thanksgiving to God, a complete healing."[1] Whether this or other skin diseases originate from nervous causes (which is often the case) or from a purely physical source, the bringing of the sufferer into contact with God, either through a healer or through his own private devotions, has been shown to be the first step to a cure, and very often the only step needed.

The healing of skin diseases through worship, public or private, is one example which proves how short-sighted it is of those who claim that whereas "prayer may well cure functional disorders, it cannot cure organic". The truth, of course, as enlightened medical opinion has confirmed, is that we cannot draw as rigid a line between the two

[1] *He Heals Today*, p. 64.

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kinds as some people would like to imagine. Doctors themselves will frankly confess that, in many cases, they cannot put an illness into one category.

Be this as it may, it is certainly the case that even so-called incurable diseases come within the scope of spiritual healing. "We were once asked to pray for a man of seventy-two," says Agnes Sanford, "suffering from cancer of the throat. The condition gradually disappeared, to the complete amazement of the French specialist, who, more honest than many doctors, confounded himself with cries of 'Extraordinaire! Extraordinaire!'"[1] And this is by no means the only case of cancer being cured by such means.

This is not to say that serious organic diseases will always be healed by prayer: but even in these cases it is claimed that the trouble is not on God's side but can be traced to *our* present stage of spiritual development. We know enough about spiritual healing today to know that "no tissue of the human body is wholly removed from the influence of spirit".

If we turn to instances of curing fevers by the influence of spirit, we shall again find modern parallels for such cures performed by Christ as that on Peter's mother-in-law (Luke iv. 38). Usually, however, they are performed by hypnotism, which one might well regard as a second-best compared with the authoritative healing word of Christ. Yet it is at least a clue as to what can happen when the personality is linked to that of Christ. Many experiments have shown that the temperature of a hypnotised person can be raised or lowered at will by suggestion.[2] Is it too much to believe that Christ—without any hypnotism, but with the penetrating power of His unique Personality—cured Peter's mother-in-law by giving her, in spite of herself, a quality of faith which not even the most practised

[1] *The Healing Light*, p. 165.
[2] *Psychology, Religion, and Healing*, L. D. Weatherhead, p. 122.

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hypnotist could evoke? I believe it's the same mysterious but all-powerful quality of faith which Christ can infuse into you and me today.

The same is true of nervous troubles, paralysis, epilepsy, and many others. Whether or not the Bible understands by these diseases what we do today is not all-important. The general picture is clear enough—that Christ did indeed heal some of the most vexing of human illnesses (is it without significance that the Bible doesn't tell of His curing anybody's cold?). And He still does so today. Within my own experience I have found gangrene and severe arterial trouble yielding (almost but not completely) to the power of prayer. And I am perfectly convinced that the little extra which would have given perfect relief is to be laid at my door, for the imperfection of my prayers. Stories of arthritis, a paralysis, etc., being healed by laying on of hands are innumerable—as is suggested in *He Heals Today*—but must we not remember for our comfort and for our quickening that healing can and does take place by prayer alone? "Mrs. S. suffered for years with rheumatoid arthritis, and had great pain in the legs. Her name was put on the prayer list and shortly afterwards she was sitting and relaxing, and she felt as if invisible hands were massaging her legs. The pain entirely left her body and she has been completely well ever since."[1] My own Prayer Fellowship has seen similar, if less spectacular, results through prayer.

* * *

Even mental diseases of the kind healed by Jesus (e.g. Mark i. 23) have been conclusively shown to submit to His healing power today. (We remember, of course, that their healing by psychotherapy is spiritual healing, but here we are confining ourselves to healings by prayer and/or laying

[1] *He Heals Today*, p. 96.

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on of hands.) Before mentioning one or two instances within my own experience, it is worth quoting another case of Mrs. Salmon's. "A man testifies to the healing of his brother, who was a mental case. He was brought for the laying on of hands. He had been under doctors and psychiatrists, and had spent long periods in a mental home and at a nerve hospital, without being cured. After receiving Divine Healing he gradually improved, states his brother, and for two years has held a responsible position in a large industrial firm in Johannesburg."[1]

From Ruislip in Middlesex a letter tells me, "I can hardly believe that you have had time to pray for M. yourself, and yet I know that there has been a wonderful improvement since the day I got into touch with you. Ever since then she has been calmer and more normal than for many months." Ought we to be surprised? And ought we to be incredulous of the improvement which certainly can take place in each of us if, by prayer and meditation, we seek to get into touch with the Great Spirit of the Universe?

Probably nothing is calculated to bring us more encouragement in these modern days than the mounting evidence relating to "absent healing"—for, if we cannot have quite enough faith in our own prayers, may it not be that the factor of faith in others' prayers for us may supply the missing factor which was needed before our healing could take place? By now it is almost a common-place to say that "it remains true that a 'feeling of isolation' in a patient is a formidable barrier to healing, and that the knowledge that a community is interceding for him is a powerful influence for recovery".[2] If the reader of this book intends to use the Healing Services in Part II for personal healing, he is strongly advised to remember this vital fact, which in itself is of considerable therapeutic value. This is not to say that

[1] *He Heals Today*, p. 86.
[2] *The Church and Spiritual Healing*, p. 131.

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we may not be helped by others' prayers without knowing it, but I personally feel convinced that "the *knowledge* of a patient that he is being prayed for may give him that mental power over his body which, even in organic illness, is frequently a potent means of the healing taking place".

Certainly our responsibility, as we go on to consider Steps to Healing, is to use every means of surrounding ourselves with that love which not only "casts *out* fear" but "leads *in* freedom".

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CHAPTER II

THE FIRST STEP

Ascertaining What Health Really Is

IF I had to answer the question "Why did Christ come to this earth?" in no more than four words, my answer would be, "To make men whole". All the sublime mystery and wonder of the Incarnation and Atonement, all the glory and miracle of the Resurrection and Ascension, were for this—that men should become exposed to the saving power of God: a power which is not concerned to save the soul alone, but to bring harmony to mind and body as well.

It is strange that this basic meaning of the word "salvation" should have been soft-pedalled for so long. Yet the soft-pedalling began as far back as the third century, when faith in a healing God noticeably declined. From then on the soul was regarded as worthy of a virtual monopoly of saving grace. And it is only within comparatively recent times that we have started to think in terms of the whole man. God, in fact, *is* concerned with our bodies and minds as well as our souls. Is it coincidence that our words "health", "whole", and "holy" all come from the same old English word meaning "complete"? I don't think so. Our well-being is not a matter of body only, or mind only, or soul only—because disease in one part very often means disease in all parts.

A famous psychologist has said that "the human being is a very closely-knit unity of body, mind, and spirit. In

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such a unity there cannot be disease at any point, at any level of being, without the whole personality being to some extent affected".[1] Many of us, no doubt, know the effect of indigestion on our tempers! Others of us may know the effect of anger on the heart. But no one can be so blind as not to see that spiritual disharmony does cause mental disharmony *and* physical disharmony.

The healing that we must seek, then, is not healing of the body or of the mind only. One point which the well-known story of the Ten Lepers brings out is the all-important one that Jesus Himself was more interested in personal wholeness than bodily healing. Because the Samaritan "praised God", and the others did not, he showed clearly that his healing had been of soul as well as of body. Strictly speaking, this is the real purpose of true spiritual healing. Nothing shows up the difference between Christ's healing method and that of most of His Jewish and pagan contemporaries than the fact of His concern to bring spiritual health *over and above* bodily health.

* * *

As I said in my first book, "One of the most characteristic features of the whole Gospel tradition is this close connection between healing and salvation." We find no support in the Bible for the view that the saving of the soul is of far more importance than that of the body—probably because, whether we like it or not, disease of the body does *not normally* tend to ennoble the soul. So that it is in our own interest, as well as a command of Christ Himself, to be made whole in every part of us. The question which we are morally obliged to ask ourselves as we come for physical healing is this: either "What spiritual or mental disharmony has led to my physical illness?" or "What effects on my mind and spirit has my physical illness had?" In

[1] *Psychology, Religion, and Healing*, pp. 317f.

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either case we will be in the position to ask for real wholeness. It is this *being aware* of the effects of illness in one part on the others that is a valuable step forward in our quest for healing, whether by laying on of hands or by our own private devotions.

Probably few sufferers who are reading this are in the position quoted below, but the example is very suggestive of what we should all be on the lookout for in our search for health. "A man may break his leg—a physical happening. This may mean losing his job, which sets up tensions and anxieties as to how he will manage to provide for his family. He may also feel resentment against someone whose carelessness was responsible for the accident, or against life itself, and this resentment may greatly slow down the natural healing processes and the bone may take a long time to knit together. Treatment, therefore, even for a fracture, must include dealing with any resultant worries . . . and also an attempt to eliminate the resentment by a spiritual approach."[1]

Now I do not wish to give the impression that we all need to be amateur psychologists in order to be healed! But it is essential to stress that we mustn't think of health as merely a state of physical well-being; nor must we think of salvation as something which affects only our soul. Why did the "Word become flesh"? Was it a mere act of condescension? Indeed not—not *merely* that. Christ became Man so that (among other things, of course) He might make humanity more like true Man; make it able to rise above its limitations; make it believe in its own God-given ability to be whole.

When Christ reached out to men, He did so "not as separate souls attached to bodies whose condition was irrelevant to the state of the soul". And yet that is the error which has been committed time after time in the history

[1] *New Concepts of Healing*, p. 32.

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of the Church. By preaching an other-worldly religion, by offering salvation for the future only, has not the Church often *created* the sicknesses which cry out to be cured? Christ's offer is personal wholeness: let us always be grateful for less, but let us never aim at less.

Ascertaining Whether I Really Want Health

The above discussion in no way suggests that Christ cannot give wholeness to a man who hardly understands what wholeness means, or who is unprepared to make the suitable response to the whole Gospel. But it is claimed that the normal procedure in the working out of God's purpose of wholeness for man is that he should play *some* part, however small, in the securing both of "religious wholeness" and "bodily wholeness". And the very least that God requires of him is his *genuine desire* to be healed.

It is rather alarming to learn that every hospital in the country contains a high percentage of patients who could be healthy again almost immediately if they genuinely wanted to be cured of their trouble. To the easy-going, undiscerning type of person it may seem fantastic that anyone who is unwell should not wish to get better. Yet this has been proved time and time again in the case-books of doctors. In my own files I have a letter from Whetstone, London, N.20, written after an article of mine had appeared in the *Sunday Times*. In the article I mentioned that the story of the man by Bethesda's Pool is almost certainly an example of a man who did not desire deeply enough to get well again (John v. 1–16). The letter reads: "I [an elderly woman with frustrating heart affection caused by rheumatic fever in youth] definitely agree with your point that the patient may not really desire to be cured because I am in my later years conscious of this . . ."

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Christ's question to the man in the story—as any Greek scholar would confirm—was just this: "Do you honestly and truly want to be healed?" I do not suggest, of course, that Christ could not, or does not, heal people who don't really desire to be cured; He often does. Nor do I think His question shows callousness, but simply the depths of His understanding of this man's real trouble, which was not purely physical at all. I believe it is only the undiscerning and prejudiced type of person who could write: "I was both grieved and surprised at the new aspect you throw on the narrative of the poor sufferer at the healing pool . . ." (from Troon, Ayrshire).

Be it said, of course, that neurotics and escapists from life do not always deserve censure. Christ didn't censure the man at Bethesda's Pool, for his desire to remain ill was unconscious. But He knew that, unless He could nourish or create a genuine desire to be healed, the man's healing might well be only temporary. To me it is a sign of the Divine Love that He always prefers to use man's response in working His healing miracles.

* * *

I am aware that my present topic is not a popular one, but as every clergyman and doctor knows the tragedy of this truth that "Men do not always want what they *say* they want", it must be discussed. Spiritual healing is frustrated oftener than one might think by nothing more than the patient's unconscious (or, of course, conscious) desire to remain sick, so that he can escape certain of life's commitments. Indeed, spiritual healing *may* even make the condition worse, even though the outward results seem to be good.

One case related by A. G. Ikin is worth noticing. It was a case in which a woman asked for sacramental healing, and did so only as a way of escaping the effort of facing up to

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her actual situation. "The woman had been physically incapacitated, unconsciously taking this as the easiest way out of difficult circumstances. When the symptoms proved distressing, she sought help via anointing. . . . She was not healed physically, but was thought to have been healed spiritually, as she became so sweetly resigned to the life of invalidism, with others to wait on her, instead of tackling the job at which she had broken down. A friend who suspected all was not well asked me to see her, and it was soon obvious that her 'peace' was spurious, and the result of dissociating from all her real problems and letting the burden fall on the rest of the family. . . . A psychologically trained priest . . . helped her to gain insight into the fact that she had produced the symptoms unconsciously as a way of escape from life's difficulties, and helped her to find a better way of meeting them than that. Within two months she was on her feet again; instead of being a life-long invalid, 'spiritually' healed, but one of the cases where God had said 'No' physically."[1]

This does not mean, of course, that we should all go about convinced of all sorts of unworthy motives! But it remains true that there are very few people to whom this question "Do you really desire to be well?" is entirely unnecessary. For perhaps our wish is for comfort, but not for courage; perhaps our wish is for cure of body but not for cure of soul: and Christ, I believe, asks us to face these questions squarely. Why? So that He might condemn us? Certainly not! Rather so that we might be saved a deeper malady than we have at present.

To regard the Bethesda Pool story as I have done above is *not* to focus interest on the man's sin—as one correspondent has accused me of doing! But the truth does often hurt. Didn't it hurt when we dethroned self and enthroned Christ in our hearts? Yet by so doing we have saved

[1] *New Concepts of Healing*, p. 58.

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ourselves an immeasurably deeper hurt. And so with physical or mental illness. By exposing a man's unconscious desire to run away from life, Christ is not only demonstrating His power, but also saving that man from a far worse malady in later life.

* * *

Most people no longer believe in the devil; yet are there not some Christians who *do* believe in some sort of devil, to save them from admitting they themselves have been wholly or partly to blame for their illness? Probably very few of my readers will come into this category, but I still believe it is in the Spirit of Christ Himself for me to pose this question to all my readers (and to myself): "Are you genuinely as interested in a physical cure as you are in spiritual comfort?" If so, this is indeed a great step forward in your quest for healing.

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CHAPTER III

THE SECOND STEP

Believing in a God of Forgiveness

DR. LESLIE WEATHERHEAD tells of a man, aged thirty-five, who came to him complaining of intense fear of becoming insane. "For several months he had suffered from sleeplessness, loss of appetite, abdominal pains, and feeling of panic and nameless fears. He thought at one time that he had appendicitis, he lost flesh, and at last felt so ill that he had to give up work. After a few weeks' analytical treatment, he was able to resume work but he was still far from well. Analysis continued for several months, and he improved still further, but did not get quite well.

"After careful consideration I decided to deal with him in a certain way. At the next interview I said to him, 'I have thought well over your case, and I have come to the conclusion that what you need if you want to get well is to turn to the God of your youth. You made a profession in your youth, and for years you have turned your back on God. If you repent and seek forgiveness, you will be restored to full health.' He was very angry, told me that he did not come to a psychologist to be told that, flung down his fee and walked out.

"Two weeks later he telephoned to me in great distress, and asked me to see him again. I arranged to see him in my home in the evening. When he came in he cried like a child, and said that he could not forget what I had said,

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and knew that it was true. We talked on until very late, and then humbly, and in true penitence, he turned to God, and found forgiveness. Within a month the alteration in him was striking. He completely lost his symptoms, put on weight, and was happy and well. Two years later he telephoned to me to say how fit he felt, and that the last two years had been the happiest and healthiest of his life.

"He had greatly improved with psychological analysis, but he did not find complete health until his spiritual condition was dealt with. Body, mind, and spirit were now in tune, and he was a whole man."[1]

This case is certainly in no way exceptional. Did not the Psalmist, many centuries ago, claim not just that "There is forgiveness with Thee" but also that "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven"? And surely this blessedness is not a religious thing only. I believe it is significant that such a body as the Guild of St. Raphael numbers first among its three methods "To prepare the sick for all ministries of healing by teaching the need of *repentance* and faith".

* * *

It is no longer possible to doubt that, just as physical illness can be caused and aggravated by a guilt complex—by a break in the relationship between man and God—so it can be cured by the restoration of that spiritual relationship. The curative factor in the well-known story of Christ's healing of the paralytic (Mark ii. 1–12) was nothing less than the forgiveness of sin; and we know today how often cases of paralysis are healed in the same way. The main difficulty is getting patients to realise that forgiveness *is* possible, *and* that it's for *them*.

In the work of spiritual healing both clergyman and psychologist may well be able to relieve a pressing load of

[1] *Psychology, Religion, and Healing*, pp. 339f.

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guilt, and give a person new hope, so that the natural recuperative powers of the body can take over and function freely once again, where previously the attitude of despair and hopelessness may have damped them down. This has indeed been the key to a physical cure times without number.

It's worth listening to what a great Scottish preacher and divine has to say on the subject. "We are hearing much in these days about the Church and the ministry of healing. We are being told—I for one believe quite truly—that the Church has too much neglected this part of its commission. But . . . there is one fact that is too often overlooked. It is this—that *wherever the Church truly proclaims the forgiveness of sins there the healing ministry is veritably at work.* Who can tell the incalculable results of the word of absolution for the integration of human personalities? Who can say . . . how much organic disease is being rooted out by the assurance of pardon and renewal."[1]

I, for one, am certain that a very great deal is being rooted out in this way. Not just in Church services; but in the quiet, devout atmosphere of a sufferer's bedroom or lounge. Confession is not just good for the soul, but also for the body. Why? Because it breaks down those inner barriers which prevent the healing power of God from getting through. "There can be no doubt whatever," says a writer, "but that the practice of confession has, throughout its long history, been an important factor in healing troubles both of the body and mind." And while there is, for many people, an added benefit in confessing sin to another human being, there is ample evidence in the Bible of the power of forgiveness working in response to private confession. Perhaps it depends upon one's temperament, but I am convinced that the *practice* (and I mean practice) of confession, in private, is often—though, of course,

[1] *A Faith to Proclaim*, J. S. Stewart, p. 50.

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not always—of greater healing value than a medical remedy.

This is the case, very often, because even to take a pill, for example, but still to harbour a resentment or to feel guilty for something, is doing little else than relieving the symptoms—if that. Moreover, there is even the possibility of a man accepting his illness as a kind of atonement for the guilt he does feel, and making no effort to get rid of it through confession and the accepting of God's forgiveness. This indeed seems a rather fantastic position to be in, yet what clergyman or psychologist does not know many cases of this sort?

In our quest for healing we must always try to distinguish between a healthy and unhealthy sense of sin—for morbidity is just as bad as treating sin lightly, as far as the possibility of healing is concerned. And, of course, we must never get the idea that this forgiveness which we want is a mere letting off. Forgiveness means that our *relationship* with God is as though we had never sinned. And even after that relationship is re-established, it may take some time for the damage in our body or mind to be repaired. Very often to feel forgiven *will* cure us instantly, but it is certainly wrong and immoral to *expect* it to do so. Yet it remains true that, "as Christ's words and deeds show, the healing of the body from disease is closely connected with the healing of the soul from guilt of sin".[1]

Christ's own method of approaching men through the window of the soul—used so often and with such wonderful results nineteen centuries ago—is the same method that He uses today. It is indeed the case that, by regular private devotion, a man may come to believe in the God of Forgiveness, and find this elusive but liberating experience of forgiveness, which acts as the oil of the machinery of healing. That is why Bible reading is never a merely religious

[1] *New Concepts of Healing*, p. 147.

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activity. That is why prayer never concerns only the soul. These things are *bound* to have some effect, however slight, upon the life of the body.

This, of course, is not to suggest that we should regard forgiveness in the same light as we regard a drug. You just can't use religion like that, anyway. And yet there are many people who regard religion simply as one way of getting better. But when it doesn't make them better, they have, I fear, plenty to say about religion!

In other words, we must want forgiveness *for its own sake*. We shall then find that other things are "added unto us"; one of these things being an increased physical well-being. We all know people who believe in God without believing in His power (and His desire) to forgive sins; but that kind of belief can have little effect either upon their religious life or upon their physical health. There are people who believe in God's Love, and yet have still to realise it in a personal way—and until they do there is *bound* to be a gap in the pipe-line carrying the healing power of God to the soul and body of man.

What better, then, can a man do than steep himself in the atmosphere of worship, of the Bible, and of prayer? How many people, indeed, could (so to speak) cure themselves if they exposed themselves to that Word which declares the Lord as the God of Forgiveness and Love? "There is forgiveness with Thee," cried the psalmist. "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him," the prophet reminds us. "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," testifies Saint Peter. "Be it known unto you that through this Man (Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," says Saint Paul.

The question remains: how many people approach the prospect or hope of healing believing in a God of Forgiveness?

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"Not what these hands have done
Can save this guilty soul;
Not what this toiling flesh has borne
Can make my spirit whole.

Thy love to me, O God,
Not mine, O Lord, to Thee,
Can rid me of this dark unrest,
And set my spirit free."

Believing in a God of Health

The last sentence of a letter sent to me from a gentleman in Llanymynech reads thus: ". . . it may be pertinently asked whether we are justified in looking for the aid of heaven to arrest processes which, by the omniscience and omnipotence of heaven, have been set in motion."

Here is a question which touches us all. Are we doing right in praying for healing, if God has willed (or even permitted) the illness? There is only one answer as I see it (and that, I confess, is not very far). *In every case God wills health.* God is a God of Health, and He made all things good. Evil in any form, including sickness, is an intrusion into His world, and, while He can use it, He certainly does not accept it as a necessary element in the working out of His will. God's purpose is one of healing, one of renewal and perfecting. And if, in any case, He is unable to heal a disease, it is not because He does not wish to, but simply that we are not securely enough connected to Him, or that we have in ignorance, or deliberately, broken one of His laws.

I myself am persuaded that many illnesses which do not respond usually to medical or spiritual treatment will,

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when science has learned more about their causes, be cured without much difficulty. Then, possibly, we will be able to believe better in the fact that it *was* God's will all the time that they should be healed. The break in the healing pipeline was at the human end. After all, our forefathers believed it was God's will that certain diseases should lead to death, but modern medicine has taught us otherwise. Let us, then, be very careful in calling something God's will merely because we cannot understand it.

Jesus Himself is the final argument against this common idea that God is only a healing God *sometimes*. Christ showed God's ideal purpose for every man as health of body, mind, and spirit. Sickness is abnormal; not health. God does not send things to try us—though, of course, very often we can build up character through illness, but how often is the reverse true! We must resist very strongly the view that sickness must be accepted as from the hand of God. Nothing is more calculated to make a man sick, or aggravate his sickness, than this misguided idea.

Nor is sickness sent as a punishment. Many people still adopt this idea as a legacy from early Jewish religion. Christ did all He could to discourage this notion, for He knew how fatal an attitude it was, if a man needed to be healed. Certainly, by our wilful self-indulgence, or even by our ignorant breaking of God's laws, we may, in a sense, punish ourselves—but it is not God who punishes us. God desires to redeem.[1]

* * *

Nothing is so important for our chances of a cure than finding faith in God—faith in a God who forgives and who heals. I wonder how deeply the psalmist understood the word "health" when he cried: "I shall yet praise Him who

[1] For a full treatment of this vital point see *The Church and Spiritual Healing*, pp. 33–47.

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is the health of my countenance and my God," or spoke about God's "saving health being known among the nations". Certainly there are too many Christians today who regard God as the God of their soul's health only when, in reality, He is God of their whole personality's health. What is faith? Isn't it the opening of our *whole being* to God? Yet how many people regard faith as some special faculty of the soul only? In fact, faith only in the God of religion is a dangerous thing. Only by giving our whole selves—body, mind, and soul—in faith to Him can we expect to find healing. "We do not always realise," says a writer, "there are many ills from which we cannot be set free until we get outside the circle of self-centredness, and open the whole of our being to God, who can then work *in* us what He could not do *for* us, so long as we remained self-centred. Faith and self-centredness are incompatibles."[1]

And to think of our sick body as our affair, and our soul as His affair, is just a form of self-centredness (though I do not suggest it should be severely censured!). Faith in God as the Author of our wholeness in every part brings us to discover our true centre of gravity again: and that discovery, in itself, will have the most far-reaching power for healing.

Of course, just as we must not think of God as God of the soul, so we must not think of Him as exclusively God of the body. In other words, to possess a faith which can believe no more than that God can heal the body is not really faith in the truest and deepest sense. Some people think it is a little unfair for such shallow believers to be healed at all! Yet it happens. Think of how often Christ healed men in the New Testament, and they had nothing much more than a simple confidence in His power to heal. Why did He do so? One reason, though not the only one, was His

[1] *New Concepts of Healing*, p. 42.

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hope that a physical cure would lead to a deeper kind of faith, which in turn would lead to a cure of soul.

Christ's action, I believe, contains a message of comfort and hope for any of us who seek healing of body, but who know we just do not possess a real Christian faith. Christ *does* heal those who have little more than expectancy or who are even in a state of suggestibility, in the hope that such healing will lead to a spiritual experience of the fullness of God's Love. It has truly been said that "we are on the way to health as soon as we have the conviction that we can be cured". But it is worth while emphasising, "on the way". Christ never heals a man's body for its own sake; He refuses to be Lord of the body only. Yet must we not admit that there is nothing but good in a healing of body which comes through mere confidence?

Rebecca Beard tells of a healing which came through such confidence, and which might serve as encouragement to any reader who feels himself to be disqualified from any healing on the grounds that he cannot yet believe in a God of Health, as revealed in Jesus. "A friend, critically ill with pneumonia, was not completely convinced that he could be helped by prayer alone. 'It sounds so easy the way you tell it. If it is as easy as that, why doesn't everyone do it?' . . . An illustration came to my mind—that of a strong man standing in a circle of his friends asking each one in turn to come and stand in front of him and fall backward into his arms, assuring them that he would not let them fall. Simple? Well, it would depend a lot on who does the catching, wouldn't it?

"It does depend on who does the catching, and it depends on our absolute faith and trust in that 'One' not to let us down. . . . When we returned an hour later his wife met us at the door with his sleeping-jacket in her hand. It was soaking wet with perspiration. 'I have just changed him into dry clothes, and changed his bed, and he is sleeping

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like a baby.' The fever was broken, the crisis was passed. Even though *he did not profess a deep religious belief*, that boy really knew who was doing the catching! He instinctively realised that there was a power great enough to take care of him. Believing this, he relaxed all tension and the body did the rest."[1]

* * *

Now, I think the proper response to that simplest of stories is not "Why do healers stress the need for true Christian faith?" but "What might not be achieved *with* true Christian faith?" The *ideal* must still remain faith in the God of Healing, and not in the healing alone. There are too many cases of relapses in the healers' case-books today to make us alter the standard that Christ Himself looked for—namely, mature Christian faith: faith in the God of Health, not in the *possibility* of health.

There is another good reason why men should have faith primarily in God, and not in healing: because it is possible that a mature Christian faith will *not* produce a healing, and that simple confidence *will*. Failure to be healed physically is not necessarily a reflection on the patient's faith—but, unless his faith is in God and not in healing, the likelihood is that he will suffer a disillusionment, which might well be the forerunner of even more tragic illness. In fact, it is the man with saving faith who alone *can* secure a healing which is permanent. Without such faith in God, a man is almost bound to have a relapse, for, as we showed earlier, disharmony in the soul must, through time, produce disharmony in the mind or body.

As we follow our quest for spiritual healing, by private devotion or by any other means, it is worth while remembering the Apostle Peter who is so concerned to underline the fact that it was "by faith in *His Name*" that the man whom

[1] *Everyman's Search*, R. Beard, pp. 38f.

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he had just healed was made strong . . . "yes, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all".[1] This man's faith was nothing less than faith in Jesus as the Son of God. And, if we are to be thankful for any healings which take place through a lesser faith than that, we are nevertheless to set for ourselves no lower a standard than this—to have the faith which believes in God to the uttermost *whether or not* He grants physical healing. It is indeed one of the wonderful paradoxes of the Faith that, the deeper our sense of dependence and the richer our trust, the more chance there is of the Divine Power flooding body, mind, and soul. So let it be!

"O Love, how cheering is Thy ray!
All pain before Thy presence flies;
Care, anguish, sorrow melt away,
Where'er Thy healing beams arise;
O Jesus, nothing may I see,
Nothing desire, or seek, but Thee."

[1] Acts iii. 1–16.

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CHAPTER IV

THE THIRD STEP

Living Positively

PROBABLY there are few people who do not admit that many, or at least some, physical illnesses are caused by disharmony of soul. But I wonder how many realise that, by avoiding such disharmony, by never adopting certain attitudes of mind, these illnesses need not materialise at all? This, of course, is not a popular conclusion in view of the strain imposed upon human nature. It is much, much easier to believe that disease always arises outside the body and that there's nothing we can do about it. But there certainly is!

Let it be said quite simply and quite plainly: spiritual healing is not merely a method of curing, but also a method of *preventing* illness. That is one reason why, even after a healing has been obtained, regular devotions are essential to help prevent a relapse, or the taking of some other disease. As I said in my previous book: "We have already deplored the attitude of the man who hopes to be cured without any effort of his own. We can now deplore the attitude of the man who hopes to *avoid illness* without any effort of his own." This is not to say that, by the grace of God, some people may avoid it without trying to keep their souls in trim; but, in general, man *does* have much of the responsibility for keeping well.

We are hearing much today about the Power of Positive Thinking, as though this was a new idea. Yet it is as old

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as the Bible, at least. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Yes, the wrong thoughts have the power of cancelling out the right drugs, and the right thoughts have the power of neutralising or even overcoming completely the countless germs which surround us every minute of our lives. It's true that many illnesses are caused by germs: but only because, or often because, of the negative reaction to life which we have within us, and which has lowered the whole tone of our bodies, as well as our minds.

One writer tells of a woman with a mysterious eye-complaint, and whom the doctors had been unable to help. "Now I knew this person very well, and a great deal of her personal history. Her only remaining child had died three years before this . . . A son had died several years before that. She was a very tender-hearted woman, a devoted mother, and happy with her husband. But the last blow, the loss of her daughter, was a great burden to her, and more than suspicion told me that she spent much time in tears.

"I ventured to talk the matter over with her, and put it this way: 'It seems to me that your eyes are telling you that they have really had just about enough of this, and that they cannot go on being treated in this way. You are hanging on so tenaciously to your grief that your subconscious mind has room for little else. This, combined with the fact that you are crying so frequently, is probably a major factor in the eye-complaint. You must get rid of your grief. Hand it over to God, Who is more than able to bear it. Let Him do with it what He will, but pass it over to Him. More than that, you must *replace it with something else*. Replace it with the knowledge that God is in fact giving you the very things which the loss of your daughter seems to have destroyed. Fill your mind with the truth that God can enable you to rise above all the grief, the sorrow, the sense of loss.'

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"I was afraid that my friend might be offended by this approach, but on the contrary she agreed that these things might be so. And so I gave her a month's course of prayer and meditation . . . and she consented to use them in the way I suggested. The eye condition vanished within seven days. It recurred a few times in a much less troublesome form, but is now quite absent. . . . It seems clear to me that here was a case in which the major factor ('the spirit of man') was very much in evidence, and where neither psychiatry nor clinical experience had the last word."[1]

As A. G. Ikin has said: "Our prides and prejudices, our fears and our resentments, our hates and our touchiness, are as potent a cause of disease as any microbe. Spiritual healing involves a casting out of negative and infantile emotions and a growth towards spiritual maturity." Yet are there not those who look on spiritual healing as little other than a semi-magical way of being cured—and that's that? Is it morally right for any man to pray for healing of symptoms without praying for healing of the inner causes of the symptoms? I do not think so.

I think I should say that I do not regard the Healing Services laid out in Part II of this book as a sort of glorified drug! Their aim is to nourish spiritual maturity before physical cures. The cures may, of course, come first; but I feel compelled to remind those who are so healed that they may not yet be healed in emotion or in soul. Until that happens it is dangerous to regard the cure as complete, or as permanent.

God's aim is not primarily to remove symptoms but to transform *life*. And if that is done, how can it help being reflected in the body? "I wish we could all take a vacation from negation," says Dr. Beard. "I wish for one day we could exalt everything in our bodies. Too long we have

[1] *Healing Prayer*, Wm. Portsmouth, p. 48.

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been taught that the body is a miserable thing which we have to carry around with us, rather than the temple of the living God, the only instrument through which God can speak and express. Remember we are told that we must glorify God in the flesh. 'Yet in my flesh shall I see God.' Do we see Him there? We could. Let us perfect the flesh, and we perfect it by transforming our mind—by changing our potential from negative to positive."[1]

Jesus Himself said it was possible for man to do this. What happens to us comes from within more than from without. That's why spiritual healing which is to be the most effective must in some way use the *conscious* mind of the patient (though, as said before, this doesn't mean we are not to be grateful for cures achieved without this full consciousness of the patient). A man *may* be healed by the laying on of hands, and be quite passive—yet, if he does not subsequently change his life, if he does not change a negative to a positive attitude, the greatest part of the benefit is automatically taken away. He can only receive complete healing by the deepest and most enduring faith in a personal Saviour.

* * *

As has been so wisely and finely said: "Spiritual healing must be purged of its infantile and pagan accompaniments, if it is to bring its contribution to the mental, physical, and spiritual health of mankind. It *is* necessary to become psychologically mature to *extend* the Kingdom of God, however childlike it is necessary to be to *enter* it."[2] It is a sad commentary on many Christians, indeed, that they seem to be concerned only to "enter the Kingdom", and to be blind to the possibilities of *extending* it through body,

[1] *Everyman's Search*, p. 30.
[2] *New Concepts of Healing*, A. G. Ikin, p. 47.

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mind, and soul. Is Norman Vincent Peale just being imaginative when he says: "What you believe in the heart—that is, deep in your subconsious mind—determines what you can or what you cannot do. So if you practise believing that with the help of God you can overcome obstacles and achieve success, your will and imagination will flow forth together, and, against that power, nothing negative . . . can stand?"

It seems to me a terrible pity—and rather a judgment on the Christian faith—that this power of positive thinking is often practised more effectively by those who own no allegiance to Christ at all. I recall the simple but moving story of the little boy with a leaky heart. "I had prayed for the healing of the heart," says Agnes Sanford, "but with slight success. The heart was better, but was not well. It came to me that I needed active co-operation from the little boy. So I questioned him concerning his knowledge of God.

"'I know all about God,' he replied serenely. 'God is in this room, only you can't see Him because He's invisible.'

"'Yes. Isn't that funny?'

"'Not to me, it isn't.'

"Thus I was reproved. Billy, I decided, knew about God with more profound simplicity than I did. It remained only for me to teach him how to make his knowledge of God work for the healing of his heart.

"How about playing a little pretend-game with me? Pretend you're a big fellow going to Grammar School and you're on the football ground. Shut your eyes and see yourself holding the ball and running ahead of all the others. The other boys will say 'Just look at him run! My, he's strong! I bet he's got a strong heart!' Then you say, 'Thank you God, because that's the way it's going to be.' . . . A month later the doctor was delighted to pronounce the heart perfect."[1]

[1] *The Healing Light*, pp. 26f.

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Now, again, I think that story is not support for anything less than a mature Christian faith, but rather an invitation to say to oneself: "If that can happen, what couldn't happen to me *with* a mature Christian faith, and an unassailable belief in God as the God of Health? Shall I too not go out and rename my world? Shall I too not live positively? Shall I too not claim my inheritance of wholeness, as God's gift?"

* * *

No clergyman can go about his work without discovering a rather depressing fact: that most Christians are acutely disease-conscious. The most common topic of conversation is not the weather, but the ailments of men! They take illness for granted. They speak about such and such a trouble as being hereditary, and therefore unavoidable. They rarely trace illness to the negative emotions which fill their hearts. They rarely see the presence of sickness as caused by the absence of positive thinking. And yet we cannot possibly *live* healthily unless we *think* healthily. Must we not stop imagining that illness is inevitable, and believe that by positive thinking and living we can find the health which is the *normal* pattern of things?

It is in this light that we must understand the oft-repeated bit of pulpit advice about every situation, however black, containing within itself the material for its transformation. If we don't or can't believe that, then we are bound to inflict some physical or mental ill upon ourselves. It is not wrong, of course, to feel grief or many other emotions, but to prolong them indefinitely is not only a sign of distrust of God (which is serious enough), but is also the sure road to ill-health and unhappiness.

As I have pointed out elsewhere: "There can no longer be any doubt as to the fact that strong negative emotions can change for the worse the chemical composition of gland

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secretions, just as strong positive emotions can change them for the better. . . . In other words, we *poison our own systems*. It is by His dispelling of this poison that Christ heals today. He helps men to develop a new thought-habit, to replace every thought of fear with one of faith; every thought of illness with one of health; every thought of death with one of life. . . . Men *can* 'do all things through Christ' . . . Christ has failed in His purpose if a man's emotions are not altered from negative to positive. It is that alone which saves him, and it is that alone which heals him."[1]

In a few words, salvation is not a static thing: and, if we want it—in body as well as soul—we shall have to take the Apostle quite literally. "Let this *mind* be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"Often we have weary feet,
Many a heavy cross have we;
Yet Thy sacrifice complete
Gives us faith that Thine we be:
Through the dark day's dragging length
Give me strength
To live to Thee."

Loving Perfectly

Is it possible to love perfectly in this life? It certainly does not look like it. But we cannot start to read the New Testament without seeing just how near to perfection Christ Himself, as well as writers like Paul, assume we *can* get. What point in saying, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another" if Christ had not

[1] *The Church and Spiritual Healing*, p. 143.

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believed in the capacity of man so to love? "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." What point would there have been in Paul saying "Let love be without dissimulation", if he hadn't believed in the possibility of such love?

If anyone is doubtful about the possibility of loving perfectly, is this not just the result of failing to see the significance of Christ's Incarnation? He came to show us Manhood at its best, *and* to show us what our manhood should be like. If we cannot imagine ourselves loving perfectly, isn't it because we are not living positively in the glory of this Message which proclaims that we *can* do the things we thought we could *not* do?

"The love that caused all creation cannot rest content with anything less than perfection, and so is constantly working towards it." And that, I believe, is strictly true. But God cannot redeem us completely until we have made an appropriate response to His Love. This, let us note, is true both for the soul and for the body. It is precisely our love of others which is the channel of our own healing. Whenever we go out to others, God comes in to us.

Why are we commanded to love one another? Yes, partly because that is the morally correct thing to do. But isn't there more to it than that? God is the God of Wholeness, and He knows that, as long as our love is absent or imperfect, we are *condemning ourselves* to being physically and mentally imperfect. Love is the expression of a properly tuned personality, and cannot help but tone up the body and the mind.

Elsewhere I have claimed that, "It is the man who recognises the love of God for what the Church says it is, who finds peace and harmony of soul, and who, therefore, is most favourably placed as far as avoiding physical disharmony is concerned." But I confess to knowing some

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Christians who have actually disqualified themselves from this benefit because they have exalted God's Love towards them at the expense of *their* love towards God (and their fellows). It is very tempting to become so dazzled by the Love revealed by the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, that we find ourselves lying back in its sunshine—and yet soon lying down in sickness! Why? Because we cannot truly appreciate God's Love without desiring to love perfectly.

Do we not all know Christians who claim to know the Love of God but who prove they do not by the absence of love in their lives? These are the people who very often become puzzled at their physical ailments—and, even, in the course of time lose their fervour for religion. These are the people who, claiming to know God's Love, manifest in their lives all the negative emotions which are the very opposite of love.

Think, for example, of untruthfulness and deception. Can you tell a lie and deceive your fellow-man without harm to yourself? Many people think so. Yet, as the lie-detector has shown us, such conduct actually changes the temperature of our body; actually changes our blood pressure; actually affects the action of the heart. And, if this goes on long enough, the effects upon the body can be very serious indeed. Prolonged hate does the same. By hating we simply pile up nervous energy (known or unknown to ourselves) which, unless relieved in some way (preferably by stopping to hate!) will explode and cause us severe distress. Truly many modern doctors are telling us that the *real* sympathetic nerves are the "nerves of love and hate".

* * *

"It is no coincidence," says William Portsmouth, "that the seven deadly sins are commonly called 'deadly'. Pride,

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envy, covetousness, anger, lust are particularly so. They are as damaging to the consciousness of the person who entertains them as to the person to whom they are directed. They are, persisted in, deadly to the moral sense, and productive of deadliness to the physical frame. They carry the germs, so to speak, of mental and physical debility, and shut out the wholesome influence that the life-giving Spirit of God is always exerting in us."[1]

Whereas love is creative and maintains the rhythm of the body, all such negative emotions are destructive and upset its rhythm. It is no longer a matter for argument that bitterness and resentment which have been bottled up and brooded on can result in arthritis—or many another "itis". Apoplexy is certainly not unconnected with prolonged anger; and another of the deadly sins—pride—frequently reflects itself in physical stiffness. Some doctors even believe that jealousy and envy tend to block the passages—a case of "spiritual blockage" being reflected or expressed in "physical blockage". And certainly there can be little doubt but that lovelessness in all its forms is deadly enough to cause hardened tissue, and many other purely physical manifestations.

People may ask: "But how can I help my nature?" And there is only one correct answer. "By believing that it is *not* your nature." Few things frustrate perfect love more than the unwarranted belief that a bad temper, or the tendency to irritation, or hard-heartedness are inherited. Here is an example of the power of wrong belief. We cannot start loving perfectly until we start living and thinking positively. The nature which many people think they have is simply the nature they believe they have. If this belief could change, in an almost miraculous way, so would the nature. This is the very kind of belief which Jesus almost

[1] *Healing Prayer*, p. 45.

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certainly cast out of people in New Testament times—and He can do so today.

* * *

The most common of all negative emotions, of course, is *fear*. When felt in small doses, as it were, there is little harm in succumbing to it (the same is true of grief); but the effects of prolonged fear are profoundly destructive. Whether it is fear of suffering, of old age, of death; fear of war, or poverty, or the future generally—fear causes blood-sugar to pour into the blood-stream; blood-pressure is raised to let the muscles react with greater agility. If no action takes place which would use up this sugar and let the system relax again, blood-pressure continues to increase, until the body has to protect itself by strengthening (i.e. thickening) the walls of its arteries. So this hardening of the arteries is not always a disease over which we have no control: we often bring it upon ourselves, for it is, in this case, simply a protective process directed against an unnatural prolongation of this most common of negative emotions—Fear.

Which of us does not know the effect of continued apprehension upon the digestion? Which of us does not realise how frustrating are our several fears about life? And yet, as Saint Paul reminded us, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind".[1] God's gift to us is the liberating power of love. "Perfect love casts out fear." And so it does. Fear paralyses; love releases. To love God in the knowledge that "all things *do* work together for good", to love man in the knowledge that he too is a child of God, is the key to a sound mind *and* a sound body. No drug can steady the nerves like an assurance of God's Love; and no power can

[1] Tim i. 7.

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liberate the self-recuperative capacity of the body better than a wholehearted loving of one's fellows.

We have discovered, in fact, that it is not merely a religious duty to love one's neighbour, but an indispensable condition of personal well-being. In loving people we do indeed "exalt the highest in ourselves", including our physical beings. Can we believe it? And can we do it? In Christ we can.

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CHAPTER V

THE ESSENCE OF HEALING

Praying Without Ceasing

"THE simplest and most direct of all prayer-projects," says Agnes Sanford, "is the healing of the body. The body is indeed a laboratory exquisitely adapted to the working out of the power of God. And healing by some form of prayer or faith is as natural and as instinctive as breathing. It has been practised, with or without understanding, by people of every age."[1] This, surely, is not an overstatement. Nothing in the Bible is more impressive or more encouraging than the promises of God connected with prayer. "Ask and ye shall receive."

It is worth while stressing this point: that prayer does not rest solely on man's *need* to pray but on God's promise to answer prayer. We pray not simply because we *hope* it will do us some good, but because God *knows* it will do just that. This, of course, is not to suggest that prayer is a kind of magic. It isn't. For it is an intensely personal affair. We reinforce, as it were, the self-recuperative powers of our body in so far as we make the relationship between God and ourselves real. Prayer isn't a "hit or miss" affair. It is a scientific fact that "prayer to God may so reinforce the ego (i.e. the self) that it becomes able to dispel the disruptive force of the 'evil invasion'."[2]

[1] *The Healing Light*, p. 21.
[2] *New Concepts of Healing*, p. 33.

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There are many, of course, who have not found it so. Why? I think basically because they do not *believe* they will receive. Isn't it the case that a doctor may be able to do more for a man who believes in him, than for a man who does not? The same is true of prayer. There is no treatment in the world which would not prove even more effective if administered in the context of a loving and believing relationship between healer and healed. Hence, the best guarantee for maximum well-being lies in praying without ceasing, i.e. being in a permanent attitude of loving and depending trust upon God.

For, what is it that produces so many of our sicknesses, but tensions of one kind or another? And what is there better than quiet, believing prayer for relieving these tensions? It has been shown without any shadow of doubt that "the power of prayer acts as quickly and as directly as any material agency in acute congestion". To relieve emotional tension is to allow the blood to flow freely once again, and to allow the body to return to its normal rhythm. The Guild of St. Raphael rightly puts prayer as No. 1 of the methods used in the Church's Healing Ministry: "Prayer is the simplest, as it is the ever-available means of bringing the human personality, with all its needs, into touch with Divine Grace. The sick person may do much by prayer to *help his own recovery*."

* * *

It is worth saying, of course, that prayer does not produce healing energies which were not there all the time. We pray not only because we believe our request for health is in accordance with God's will, but also because one of the conditions of His healing energies being given to us is just our willingness to ask for them. There are indeed many things God desires to give us, but simply cannot until we ask for them. Our prayers, in fact, are not like the requests

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of a beggar, imploring God to heal us; they are the token of that spiritual relationship which allows the already present energies to work in us and through us.

Dr. Weatherhead tells us of a healing which took place as a result of a new relationship which the patient found towards God, and it will serve both as comfort and as challenge to each of us. "A close friend of Rosslyn Mitchell, M.P., was about to be operated on for some internal swelling after examination by two surgeons. I quote the words of the patient herself: 'I prayed that the hand of the surgeon might be guided so that, if it was God's will, I might be spared to my children. Then I seemed to hear a voice saying, "Have you a still greater faith?" And I said, "I know that God does not need a surgeon to do this, and that if it is His will, He can take it away." I then had a feeling of great peace and went to bed. In the morning when I awoke, the lump had gone.'"[1]

This, of course, is not to suggest that all troubles will vanish as a result of adopting this deeper attitude of faith: but it certainly makes the possibility of a healing more real. In the event of failure, it is far wiser to assume that God wants us to try again, to deepen our faith further, to get an even finer tuning on the receiver of our soul, than to assume His will is for us to remain unwell. How many healings could be related which took place—many of them suddenly—as a result of perseverance in prayer!

One case that comes to mind is that of Genevieve Parkhurst who was completely healed of a lump through prayer. "As she prayed alone one day," Dr. Beard tells us, "a terrific pain, like an electric shock, went through the lump and down her arm. When she recovered sufficiently she put her hand where the lump had been, and there was a hollow place as large as a fist. The lump had disappeared."[2]

[1] *Psychology, Religion, and Healing*, p. 238.
[2] *Everyman's Search*, p. 63.

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Truly "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much". This kind of prayer is certainly far from being the auto-suggestion that many sceptics would have us believe!

* * *

Needless to say, perhaps, prayer is most effective usually when it is accompanied by the visualising of the condition we desire. If we dwell on our illness as we pray (and the same holds good in our prayers for others), the chances are that the healing power of God cannot accomplish what it desires—simply because the tone of our personality is not at its highest potential, and there is still something for God to overcome. As Dr. Beard has said in another place: "To pray the prayer of healing we must be able to visualise a change for which we can give thanks. We must be able to see the opposite of that which we deplore. Dwelling upon the negative will never change it to the positive. We must reconstruct the situation, and see all the factors in harmonious order the way we would like to see them. In that way we reverse the power and it will flow in the opposite direction."[1]

In fact, we can go the length of saying (as many have already said) that our prayers for healing should concentrate on the fact that such healing *is being accomplished*, even more than on the necessity for repeating the actual requests. Even though appearances seem to contradict this, we should still accept *His* Word and believe *His* Promise, rather than accepting *our* feelings in the matter and believing in *our* inadequacy. To put it in this way: saying "I thank Thee, Lord", shows God that the door is still open, and assures *us* that the "wind of heaven" is still blowing through. "In everything," says the Apostle, "by prayer and supplication, *with thanksgiving*, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God . . . shall keep your hearts

[1] *Everyman's Search*, p. 102.

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and minds through Christ Jesus." And—may we not add —"your body also"?

Certainly there *are* "very difficult cases in which adjustment to the laws of God cannot be made perfectly in this lifetime"; yet I believe this prayer which is offered as the complement of positive living and perfect loving is well-nigh all-conquering; and I am sure that, for the honour of God and the maximum well-being of self, while breath lasts, we must pray in faith—not so much because we just can't help it, but because of this gracious Promise which makes prayer possible at all. It is indeed fine to believe in healing: but how much finer to believe in God—with or without healing!

"May we in faith receive Thy word,
In faith present our prayers,
And in the presence of our Lord
Unbosom all our cares."

Praying With Others

Not so long ago it might have sounded a little fantastic to suggest that the negative emotions of people living a good distance away from our homes had some effect, however slight, on us. Yet, as has been stated in bold and noble words: "Our thought-vibrations are not limited by time or space. The sorrow of a nation is the sorrow of the world, for it creates in the air a thought-vibration of sorrow. The agony of the race is the agony of humanity, for it generates a 'static' that confuses the love-vibrations of the whole world."[1]

I myself do not regard it as in the least fanciful that many of our ailments fail to respond to the power made available through our own prayers because of the "static" created

[1] *The Healing Light*, p. 175.

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by our neighbours or by those far removed from us, and whose negative emotions are polluting the healing atmosphere. What are we to do about it? First, I think, realise that God's will as far as healing is concerned is not merely for the individual—not merely for me—but for the whole world. He is set upon redeeming the world. This, of course, means that our prayers cannot possibly be circumscribed by the little circle known as "self". And I think it means more even than praying *for* others. It means praying *with* them. It means having a sense of partnership with all those who accept God's healing purpose as a purpose of healing for the world.

This sounds almost like the idea of the Remnant, which is so prominent in the Bible—and so it is. In the mystery of Providence, God does use the added power of a group to accomplish what He could not accomplish through the prayer of the individual. As A. G. Ikin has suggested, there are some disorders which may "require corporate activity to break through. The individual alone cannot counteract it". Which means that there is thrown upon each of us the responsibility of praying not just for ourselves, not just *for* others, but *with* others. The more we can add to the already millions-strong fellowship of prayer throughout the world, the more we shall make an impact upon the power of evil in all its forms—and thus not only help others whom we've never seen, but help also ourselves.

Of course, it is often not easy for a sufferer to have such a wide perspective. Yet this, in itself, is a subject of personal prayer. Nothing is more detrimental to individual health than an exclusive preoccupation with self. We must indeed, as one writer has stated, "be lifted out of ourselves, and all our self-concern, and become identified with the grand, over-all Divine objective of world-redemption".[1] Now this doesn't mean simply that we should pray less for

[1] *Healing Prayer*, Wm. Portsmouth, p. 20.

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ourselves and more for others, but that we should become more conscious of those who are praying for us and not see our own prayers as simply a "drop in the bucket". As Christians we are members of a world-wide fellowship of prayer. The more real this fellowship becomes, the more real will our own prayers become, and the more likely our healing will be.

But, of course, praying with others does involve praying for others, and a final word can be said on that theme now. My own conviction about intercessory prayer in relation to other methods of healing, such as laying on of hands by individual healers, has been indicated elsewhere. Suffice to say that the larger part of spiritual healing was intended not for the gifted individual but for the praying fellowship. How can we love perfectly without expressing that love in prayer? How can we live positively without believing in, and praying for, the health of others?

* * *

One thing has emerged from the work of my own Intercessory Prayer Group in Glasgow: not simply that intercessory prayer "works", but that those who offer it find an increased spiritual and physical well-being. I have, for one. And it is without any question the case that one indispensable condition for the complete healing of any sufferer is the willingness of that sufferer—at some stage of his illness—to come out of himself sufficiently to pray for others. "Thinking of the needs of others will help to take our minds off our own troubles, and by allowing the thoughts of God's healing love to flow through us to them *we shall ourselves* experience the healing."[1]

This simple, but proved, principle of prayer is worth noting especially by those who are—or think themselves

[1] *Healing Prayer*, Wm. Portsmouth, p. 54.

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to be—chronic invalids. Intercession is not just a sacred ministry which every seriously ill person can exercise in Christ's Name, but it is one (only one, of course) of the channels along which healing may well come. The Guild of St. Raphael points out: "In those who are spiritually-minded and unselfish, suffering deepens their sympathy with the afflictions of others. This sympathy, translated into prayer, is a valuable work of intercession which not only helps fellow-sufferers, but brings joy into the life of the intercessor."

Is it accidental that the Apostle, starting to speak about prayer, writes: "I exhort that, *first of all*, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made *for all men* . . ."? He knew that one of the best tests of a balanced personality was whether a man can put others before self. And it is a well-known fact today, in medical circles, that the best way to stay ill—indeed, to become worse—is to indulge in an overdose of self-pity, to expend all the energies of one's concern upon self. To intercede for others, in fact, is not just a religious duty; it is sound common sense.

Within my experience, there was a lady who had suffered for years with arthritis. In as discreet a way as possible, I was able to ascertain not just that she spent much of her time moping, but that she had never, during that time, prayed for anyone but herself (she had been unable, or unwilling, to come to church during that period). Even then, her prayer had been more a complaint than a request. Partly, I believe, through the prayers of our group, she was led to ponder this discovery. As a result of this she is now remarkably more compassionate and sensitive to the needs of others, and is now practically, but not quite, free of her original trouble.

If the full story were known, how many millions have found what a liberating power is this "out-going prayer"?

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Like mercy it "blesseth him that gives, and him that takes". It can even bless you.

* * *

By way of an epilogue to this chapter, it might be helpful to the reader to gather together the main points of the preceding pages. We saw in Chapter I that our final authority for spiritual healing is Christ Himself, and that healings in His Name were not reserved only for New Testament times—they are an equally essential part of His work today. We can certainly regard the innumerable modern cures by prayer which have been reported as a strong encouragement to faith now.

After discussing the First Step to Healing (which consists of making sure (1) that we know what health really is, and (2) making absolutely sure that we do want it), we went on to show the need for a deep personal faith in God as One who wills to forgive and who wills to heal. The idea that God might *want* a person to be ill cannot be tolerated for a moment.

Step Three comprised "Living Positively", i.e. trying to act in an active, optimistic way, and "Loving Perfectly", i.e. adopting a constantly selfless and sympathetic attitude to others—the very attempt to do this being a not inconsiderable factor in our increased well-being.

The essence of healing, however, must always be Prayer —not just setting aside regular periods for it, but making one's whole attitude towards God a "prayer without ceasing"; together with this sense of being one of a great fellowship of effective prayer—a fellowship which believes with its whole heart that part of God's will is precisely to use these prayers in the working out of His healing purpose for the world. And, as we go to our prayers now, what better introduction could there be than "Lord, teach us to pray"?

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CHAPTER VI

HEALING THROUGH WORSHIP

An Explanation of the Healing Services in Part II

BEFORE offering a brief explanation of the Services in Part II, it is worth mentioning, or stressing again, that the method of Healing Through Worship is not intended to replace all other methods of healing. There are many channels through which we can receive God's healing power, and I believe each sufferer has the responsibility of exploring as many of these channels as possible. Yet there is no single channel of healing which is not made more effective by regular devotion on the part of the patient. Even the most impersonal kind of treatment has a greater likelihood of doing maximum good when the relationship between the patient and his God is at its deepest and most personal.

This, of course, is one of the many reasons why medical healing and spiritual healing need not be in conflict. Why should a doctor be annoyed at a clergyman interfering in his work by telling his patient to pray and read the Bible, when this will most certainly make the doctor's medicines do their work better? And why should a spiritual healer be annoyed when a medical man offers his patient a prescription which, without spiritual healing, might have been valueless, but, with it, makes the cure even more complete?

In my opinion, there is an all-important reason why Healing Through Worship should be regarded as a vital

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part of every man's healing. It reminds us as no other single healing method does, that a man's highest well-being comes through a conscious relationship to his Creator. What damage is done on occasion by thinking of spiritual healing —or any form of healing—as a form of magic! Often a cure can be had, and often it can be very spectacular, but how readily the sickness returns if there is no positive readjustment to God. Far better it is, I believe, for a man to be readjusted to God before he is healed physically, than after—for how easily man becomes "forgetful of all His benefits".

In fact, unless we are *fully conscious* of what is happening to us, as we are being healed, there is always the danger of a relapse. That is why healing through mediums, or hypnotists, or a highly emotional faith-healer can lead to the most profound disillusionment. "Methods that encourage personal responsibility and a direct responsiveness to the unseen, with ordinary consciousness undisturbed, make for greater stability and integration," says one writer.[1] Yet how many healers today have glossed over that fact? How many patients continue to hope against hope that that is not so—and that a purely impersonal, magical kind of healing is just as good?

* * *

In this connection the testimony of a world-famous psychologist is certainly interesting. Out of hundreds of patients, there was not one amongst them over thirty-five years of age whose problem was not ultimately that of finding a religious outlook on life—and that none has really been healed who did not regain his religious outlook.[2] One of the finest stories I know, illustrating the securing of healing through a new devotional attitude, brings its

[1] *New Concepts of Healing*, A. G. Ikin, p. 35.
[2] *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, C. G. Jung, p. 264.

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challenge to those of us who are "up in years", as it concerns a boy no more than eleven years of age. "As a boy of ten or eleven," says the late Rev. H. W. Workman, of the Guild of Health, "I had an accident, when jumping at school. There was nothing to show for it, and the master assumed that I was shamming, and made me go on with the full school routine. A month later I was bent double, and could not hold myself upright. The doctor was called in. He said: 'It is a toss-up whether this boy dies, or lies on his back for the rest of his life, or recovers.'

"Of course, they did not tell me that, but a boy called to another boy outside the sick room, 'I say, have you heard? Workman is going to die!' That was a real shock, and for some days I was completely rebellious. Then I realised that that attitude was no good, and I told myself that I had always professed to believe that Christ was the Good Shepherd, my Good Shepherd, and that now I must show that I really believed that. So, quietly, I fought my way down on the 23rd Psalm to resting in God. Christ was my Good Shepherd, He was going just ahead of me, it was He Who was going to decide what was going to happen to me; whether life or death.

"The outcome was not going to be a matter of chance or luck. I came to surrender my will unreservedly to His good and perfect will. The result during those weeks of waiting was not a sense of resignation, not merely peace of heart and mind, but the most wonderful spiritual joy and fellowship with Christ that I have ever known. I knew nothing of Divine Healing in those days, but it was, of course, the really right attitude for healing, and healed I was, so perfectly that later I became an international athlete."[1]

This is only one of many such stories (cf. the case of Healing Through Worship on page 517f. of the same book quoted above—a man healed through listening to a Service

[1] Quoted in *Psychology, Religion, and Healing*, p. 239.

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broadcast over the radio!), and they all illustrate in a convincing and encouraging way the great truth that, if one has made a proper adjustment to God, the ideal conditions exist for the healing of body or mind.

* * *

But there is one further point about Healing Through Worship. Regular, private devotion does not merely offer a stronger possibility of becoming healed, but it can *prevent illness altogether*. A most interesting point was made in a letter received by me a few months ago, i.e. "Nobody who has had dealings with the sick can dispute the value of the will to get well, but the will not to become ill is rather of a more difficult complexion." Indeed it is! Though, strictly speaking, it is hardly a matter of will at all. Health is really a by-product of communion. We do not usually remain well by seeking specifically to remain well. The chances are that the very opposite will take place! We remain well by keeping our whole being in tune with God.

Is this not one of the reasons why Christ Himself never had an illness? He did not "will Himself" to keep well. His perfect Health was the inevitable result of His perfect Communion. And if you say to me that "we are not Christ", I can only point out that we all, without exception, recognise that we could and should be in closer touch with Him than we are. We all instinctively recognise, in our honest moments, that much of our trouble arises from lack of communion with God, from our unwillingness to "do His will". Certainly there are few more helpful re-discoveries made in recent times than this intimate connection between personality adjustment and personal health, between worship and health. "*Maximum* health of spirit demands some form of worship, and worship, when it is true communion with God, has again and again proved

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to have won, *as a by-product*, increased health for the worshipper. Many who complain of their restlessness will fly to the doctor and the psychologist, when what they really hunger for is only to be found in God." So claims Dr. Weatherhead.

"It is now recognised that preventive medicine is essential to the health of the community," says A. G. Ikin. But how ironical it is that so often the best preventive of all is left entirely out of the authorities' consideration. "If the clergy and ministers in England did no more than realise *first in themselves*, and then get it across to their parishioners, that our mental, moral, and physical symptoms are frequently ways of escape from reality, that is from God, the revival of faith and the reduction of personality-disorders would be astounding."[1] If I may be allowed this last quotation from my previous book: "It is now realised that not only are illnesses the frequent product of certain attitudes of mind, but that, by avoiding these attitudes altogether, such illnesses need never materialise. [But] The sober implications of accepting the fact that illness originates in an unhealthy state of mind, or soul, are both obvious and embarrassing to most egotistical men and women."[2]

In a few words: we now know that private devotions are not a mere luxury, but a "Highway to Healing". Was it only a religious judgment the Israelites were being threatened with when they were warned: "And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish"? Life and Health are inseparable from the worship of the true God. The unbeliever *must*, in some sense, perish. "By faith," says Wm. Portsmouth, "we enter into life, into salvation, into health.

[1] *New Concepts of Healing*, p. 44.
[2] *The Church and Spiritual Healing*, pp. 137f.

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The true basis of all health is, in fact, spiritual. Fullness of life begins with an inner relationship with the Giver of Life. It is by means of this relationship of spirit that the mind is informed with truth, and that the body, in turn, by its actions and reactions, reveals that truth physically."[1]

Yet we cannot argue people into this elementary fact. All we can hope is that, if they persist in refuting the idea of Worship as a "Pathway to Prevention", they may still, by the grace of God, find it a "Highway to Healing". No one will deny the blessedness of turning to God *after* being brought, by illness, to the realisation that all is not well between the soul and God. But is it not even more blessed to have turned to Him in the joy of health, and found, in Him, the key not just to Life everlasting, but also to the life more abundant here and now? This much we can say to any reader of this book: that, if worship does prove a "Highway to Healing", can it not also keep you healthy, once a healing has come?

An Explanation of the Healing Services in Part II

THE Forms for Private Devotion which are offered in Part II are of two distinct kinds. The first (the actual Healing Services) are for Morning use, preferably, and are each based on one of the healing stories recorded in the Gospels: the second, the Forms for Evening Thanksgiving, are designed to be used on retiring to bed, or settling down to sleep.

I

Each Healing Service begins with the Lord's Prayer, which generations of worshippers have found the best preparation for devotion, and which should, where possible,

[1] *Healing Prayer*, p. 22.

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be said aloud and spoken very slowly, dwelling upon each of its matchless clauses in turn. How better can we ever come into God's presence than by calling Him Father? And how better can we remind ourselves of His Purpose for us than by dwelling upon these petitions? For must we not believe, as we pray, that His name can be hallowed, that His Kingdom can come, that His will can be done, in our bodies as well as our souls?

Then, is it not a sign of spiritual health and genuine humility that we ask Him for daily bread? He is not indeed a God of the soul only, but of the body too. Yet how intimately linked the two are: in one breath we ask for bread, in the next for forgiveness. Must we not ponder the truth that we cannot be fully healed—if at all—unless we have experienced the Forgiveness of Sins, and unless we have experienced the joy of forgiving others?

How often we despair! Yet the temptation is ours—not of His doing. How often we need to be "delivered from evil". And Who else can do that but God? For His is indeed "the Kingdom, the power, and the glory"—but He desires to share them with us, to use them for us, to manifest them in us. Is it this kind of faith that we shall have consolidated in our souls when the words of this perfect Prayer have passed our lips?

II

We then turn to the reading of the Scriptures; in each case one of the Gospel healings performed by Jesus. The translation used is that of E. V. Rieu. As we read, let us remember why these stories appear in written form at all. They were written down not merely to show Jesus as a wonder-worker, but to evoke the faith of those who read them. And how can these Bible pictures of Compassion and Love do anything other than that?

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They do more, of course. They give us a real cause for hope, as far as our cure is concerned. The Lord's Power is the same today as it was over 1,900 years ago. It cured the same diseases then that we suffer from today. In each story we see, in verbal picture form, that God's will is health, and that sickness is an invasion upon the natural order. Each story reminds us that God does not *need* illness to achieve His purpose, and that He certainly does not *send* illness as a punishment.

As we read, let us endeavour, in the imagination, to put ourselves in the position of those whom Jesus cured, and believe fervently in His power to heal.

III

There then follows a short, devotional comment on the Bible passage, not merely to help us understand it a little better, but to focus its message of comfort (and perhaps of challenge?), and help us see it as a promise of our healing—as indeed it is. As the approximate number of Gospel healings is twenty-five, the twenty-five Healing Services thus form a kind of short, devotional commentary on the cures performed by Jesus.

IV

This naturally leads on to prayer. While the prayers set down in Part II may well express the thoughts of most worshippers, it could be that some of the prayers might be replaced by spontaneous ones, if so desired. Again it is recommended that these prayers should be spoken aloud, and very slowly. It is not essential for all the prayers to be used, and the sufferer should feel free to select; some not used on one occasion might be used on another.

Any who intend using these Services, but who find them

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a little too long, or who find it difficult to concentrate, are advised to omit "My Thought for Today". This could always be read at a later hour of the day. Normally, however, it is hoped they would offer a well-balanced form for private devotion, lasting some ten to fifteen minutes.

* * *

The Forms for Evening Thanksgiving are, of course, much shorter, and rather simpler than the Healing Services. The necessity for thanksgiving has been stressed in earlier parts of this book, and it is appropriate that this should be the last act of devotion before settling down for the night.

I

First, we remember with the aid of selected passages from Scripture that God has *promised* to heal—a promise which pervades both Old and New Testaments: for it is upon that, really, that Our Hope is based. We do not expect healing as a result of what we are, or what we have done to earn it, but solely on the ground that God has promised to heal, and that it is His will to heal. A moment or two of Silent Meditation is recommended, making the specific promise quoted go deep into the conscious mind.

II

We then move on to a verse or two from a well-known hymn, appropriate to the subject of healing, to aid our spirit of devotion. "The heart sings," says Dr. Beard, "when we read the psalms. Great hymns of adoration and praise not only send thrills along our spines, but they lift our spirits out of anxiety and worry into a place of security and peace."[1]

[1] *Everyman's Search*, p. 101.

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III

The Prayer of Thanksgiving can then be said, for we remember not merely a direct Promise to heal (wonderful though that is), but the fact that this Promise is being fulfilled every moment of our lives. "We need not repeat any request for healing that we have once made. We need only give thanks that it is being accomplished."[1] This, certainly, should be the emphasis of our last act of devotion for each day. We cannot stress too much the importance of lying down to sleep with the idea of Thanks more prominent than that of Asking, with the experience of security rather than anxiety. Any subject for special thanksgiving can, of course, be added to the prayers provided for each day. And again a moment or two of silent meditation might well follow the Thanksgiving Prayer.

Finally, let me hope—and pray—that those who use these Healing Services and Forms for Evening Thanksgiving may share the blessing that I have received in preparing them.

"IF ANY MAN BE A WORSHIPPER OF GOD,
AND DOETH HIS WILL,
HIM HE HEARETH."

[1] *The Healing Light*, p. 26.

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PART II

TWENTY-FIVE HEALING SERVICES FOR PRIVATE DEVOTION

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THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

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FIRST HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"LEAVING that place, He withdrew to the neighbourhood of Tyre, and wishing to remain unrecognised, shut Himself up indoors. But He did not succeed in hiding Himself. A woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him at once, and came and cast herself at His feet. She was a Greek of Syro-Phoenician descent. She asked Him repeatedly to cast the demon out of her daughter.

"'First let the children have their fill,' He said to her; 'for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the house-dogs.' She took this up and said: 'True, Lord; yet the house-dogs under the table *do* feed—on the children's crumbs.'

"He said to her: 'Thanks to that saying you may go in peace. The demon has come out of your daughter.' And the woman went home and found her child laid on the bed, and the demon gone."

(St. Mark vii.)

✠

My Thought For Today

Here is a story which is regarded by many students of the Bible as one of the most difficult in Mark's Gospel. Yet it has a word for me which is as clear as it is wonderful. To start with, is it not a cause for gratitude that Christ *likes* to fail in His attempt to hide Himself? He likes to

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be sought and found. He likes people to go to the trouble of looking for Him. For it is a sign not just of need, but of faith. So that the first question I might ask myself is this very simple, but pertinent one: "Have I been put off by the fact that God's help seems to be difficult to find?"

And here is another: "Have I, like this woman, asked Christ *repeatedly* to minister to my infirmity—or have I stopped asking in face of His seeming reluctance to do anything for me?" It is a sober thought that, had this woman interpreted Christ's seeming indifference to her cry as final, her little daughter might never have been healed. Am I guilty of thinking Christ's apparent "No" to my first request means a "No" to all others? Many a fellow-sufferer has condemned *himself* to continued illness simply because of this attitude. This is one danger I certainly do not want to run into!

Can I understand Christ's seemingly severe words to this woman as a way of testing her? Indeed I can. He is pointing out that His gospel of "wholeness" is, in the first place, for the Jew, not the Gentile. Many a woman would have seen that as a firmly shut door. But not this woman of faith. She would take the "left-overs"—and that, so she believed, would be more than enough. And so it was! Here, in this story, *I* have all the proof I want that no one—saint or sinner, Churchman or non-Churchman—is denied an answer to genuine faith.

Here, indeed, was a woman who implicitly believed in the possibility of "absent healing". Can I not believe now in "*present* healing"? One thing is sure: He longs to say to me, "You may go in peace".

✠

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My Prayer For Today

Lord Christ, my Saviour, hear me this day as I bring the great need of my being before Thee; and help me to that reverence and awe of Thee which is the beginning of knowledge. May I know my need not just of bodily healing, but also of the healing of my soul. May I know Thee not just as Redeemer of my sickness, but also Redeemer of my sin. May I know Thee not just as a God Whom I can use, but as a God Who desires to use me.

If I have drawn a veil across Thy glory by my persistent unbelief and blindness, grant unto me peace, O Lord, and a new vision of Thee.

If I have clouded over the Divine Light by my tendency to despair and to fear, grant unto me patience, O Lord, and a new trust in Thee.

If I have frustrated Thy Purpose of Wholeness by my pessimism and lack of persistence, grant unto me power, O Lord, and a new zeal for Thee.

I pray Thee, Father of all, to bless all those of my fellow-sufferers who still seek relief at Thy hand. Preserve them from the temptation of accepting their illness as Thy will. Help them to see that nothing may hinder their wholeness except their too-ready submission and their too-slow co-operation. (*Silent prayer.*)

Thou Physician of men, give the grace of wisdom to all doctors.

Thou Sanctifier of men, give the grace of holiness to all ministers of Thy Word.

Thou Lover of men, give the grace of tenderness to all who watch over the sick.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"I DO believe I shall yet see the Eternal good to me, in the land of the living. Wait for the Eternal; be strong, my soul, be brave; yes, wait for the Eternal."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"All thine iniquities who doth
Most graciously forgive:
Who thy diseases all and pains
Doth heal, and thee relieve.

Who doth redeem thy life, that thou
To death may'st not go down;
Who thee with loving-kindness doth
And tender mercies crown."

✠

My Prayer

I thank Thee, heavenly Father, for what Thou hast done, and for what Thou hast *wanted* to do, in me this day. I thank Thee for being more persistent towards me, than I am towards Thee; for being more faithful to me, than

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I am to Thee; for being more understanding of me, than I am of Thee.

Yet now I know better than I did before that Thy hand is laid upon me for good; that Thy purpose of Good for me is not a figment of my imagination; that Thy promise of Good awaits only my truly receptive heart for its fulfilment.

O Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, for the gift of pardon I give Thee thanks this night.

O Light of men, that taketh away the darkness of our souls, for the gift of peace I give Thee thanks this night.

O Lord of Life, that taketh away the diseases of men, for the gift of power I give Thee thanks this night.

Through Jesus my Saviour.

Amen.

✠

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SECOND HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"ON a Sabbath day when He was teaching in one of the synagogues, a woman appeared who had been possessed by an infirmity for eighteen years. She was bent double and quite unable to lift up her head. When Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said: 'Woman, you are rid of your infirmity', and laid His hands on her.

"She was straightened immediately and praised God. But the governor of the synagogue took the matter up. He was indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, and he said to the congregation: 'There are six days when it is right for us to work. Come and be healed on one of them, and not on the Sabbath day.'

"'You hypocrites!' the Lord replied to this. 'On the Sabbath do you not one and all loose your ox or donkey from the manger and take him off to water him? And this woman, this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound, yes, eighteen years ago—was it not right for her to have been loosed from those bonds of hers on the Sabbath day?'

"When He said this, all His antagonists were put to shame, and the people thought with joy of all the glorious things that He was doing."

(St. Luke xiii.)

✠

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My Thought For Today

Jesus has nothing whatever in common with those who, for religious or any other scruples, would postpone healing to a "more suitable moment". *Now* is the day of salvation: salvation of body as well as of soul. Maybe I even feel that I am not worthy to be healed at the moment, and therefore am not making much effort to claim His own promise to me. Maybe I feel (perhaps subconsciously) that my sickness is a fitting punishment from God for something I have done (or not done), and therefore I am not taking seriously Christ's obvious power to heal me.

However I try to explain away this woman's trouble, there is no denying the wonder of this healing of one who had been bent double (whatever the cause) for eighteen years. She had never dreamed of anyone who could cure with a word! Perhaps I still share that dream? It seems almost too good to be true. Yet it *is* true. As many healers have confirmed today, even paralysis can be healed with a word. But *how* the healing might take place is not so important as the fact that it can. Just because I have not been "straightened *immediately*", have I the right to doubt or despair? God heals in the way *He* thinks fit, and I must believe His way is best.

Here, certainly, is a straight answer to those who deceive themselves with the idea that their illness is the will of God. Sin is no more God's will or creation than sickness. If it's there, it's there to be fought and overcome. But even God needs—or at least desires—our help: *my* help. This woman helped her *total* healing (i.e. of mind and soul, as well as body) by praising God. Have I helped Him by giving thanks for the least sign of improvement? For thankfulness is one small key to wholeness. I know it—yet, how difficult I find it to put it into effect in my prayers!

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The question this story leaves with me seems to be this: do I desire wholeness *merely* to be rid of my discomfort, or so that I might be able the more to glorify God? My answer to that, I realise it well, is bound to affect the possibility of a cure. Must I not then think with joy of all the glorious things He can do, *and* of the glorious Being that He is *in Himself*?

✠

My Prayer For Today

O Lord, Thou Who dost hear my prayers, and dost answer them—even though it may not always be the answer I want—grant me a fresh measure of faith as I pray now.

O Lord, Thou Who dost love my soul, and dost sustain it—even though I am hardly aware of the fact—grant me a new sensitiveness to the holy presence of Thy life-giving Spirit.

O Lord, Who dost offer me pardon, and canst bestow it—even though I grieve Thee constantly by my self-assurance—grant me a new and lively sense of my dependence upon Thee for all I am and have. For Jesus' sake.

I pray this day for those who help Thee in the sacred task of ridding men of their infirmities; for those who have been brought to a richer knowledge of Thee through their healing of body; for those who find it difficult to believe in Thy healing purpose. (Silent prayer.) *Be with the sad and the sorrowful, with the lonely and the unloved, with the disillusioned and the despairing—and may Thy healing light shine into the darkness of their lives, bringing pardon and peace.*

Thou lovest me, Saviour Christ: may I love Thee. Thou livest in me, Blessed Spirit: may I live in Thee. Thou listenest to me, my Father: may I listen to Thee.

Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"THIS word of the Eternal came to Isaiah: 'Go back and tell Hezekiah, the prince of my people, that the Eternal declares, "I have heard your prayers, I have seen your tears, and now I hear you."'"

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"O Love, how cheering is Thy ray!
All pain before Thy presence flies;
Care, anguish, sorrow melt away,
Where'er Thy healing beams arise;
O Jesus, nothing may I see,
Nothing desire, or seek, but Thee."

✠

My Prayer

Praise be Thine, O God, that Thou hast heard my prayers this day and seen my tears, and art continuing the gracious work of healing within my body and soul. For the grace by which I have been enabled to seek *Thee* before Thy *benefits*, I give thanks, Father; and for the ability to believe

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in Thy promise even without feeling Thy power, praise be to Thee, my Lord!

And for the grace, mercy, and peace which is mine in Him, I give thanks to Thee, my Restorer and my King.

Amen.

✠

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THIRD HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"As He passed along He saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples put a question to Him. 'Rabbi,' they said, 'when this man was born blind, was it he or his parents that had sinned?'

"Jesus replied: 'Neither he nor his parents had sinned. What was desired was that through this man the way in which God works should be made manifest' . . . With that, He spat on the ground, made clay with the spittle and smeared it on the man's eyes. Then He said: 'Go now and wash yourself in the Pool of Siloam.'

"The man went and washed himself, and when he came away he could see. His neighbours . . . said: 'Isn't this the man who sits and begs?' Some said it was. Others said no, though they saw a likeness. Meanwhile the man himself kept saying it was he. So they said to him: 'If that is true, how were your eyes opened?' And he replied: 'The man called Jesus made clay, smeared it on my eyes and told me to go to Siloam and wash. I went and washed myself, and I could see.'"

(St. John ix.)

✠

My Thought For Today

Here is a story which touches us all. For, are we not all prompted to ask the question which has been asked for centuries: "Where does sin come from?", and the further

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question: "Is my illness the result of sins I've committed?" Christ's questioners did not doubt for a moment that *somebody* had sinned; they took it for granted that this man's affliction was *somebody's fault.*

His answer is authoritative, and comforting (provided we do not distort it): "Neither he nor his parents had sinned." In a word, a man's illness is *not* a punishment for sin. Yet how often have I heard someone say to me: "What have I done to deserve this?" Often, at least, the answer is "Nothing". Here, then, is something for me to ponder: have *I* got rid of that Old Testament notion about illness being *inevitably* bound up with sin?

Yet, it is worthwhile remembering that some illness *is* very intimately connected with sin. Not as a punishment from God, but being the unavoidable outcome of wrong living. Perhaps *I* have even inflicted my present illness upon myself by over-indulgence, by refusing to take my sense of guilt to Jesus for forgiveness; in which case this is self-punishment! If I cherish a grudge, and this produces an ulcer, this surely is not a punishment from God!

But, however an illness is caused, the truth stands: that Christ is desirous, and is able, to cure it—usually with some sort of co-operation from the sufferer (as in this story). The truth also stands, that, from one point of view, even *my* illness—like the blind man's—is upon me in order that the "way in which God works should be made manifest". This is a bold way of looking at suffering, yet how much more sensible than believing suffering is inflicted on me by a revengeful God!!

✠

My Prayer For Today

Lord Christ, I come with my affliction to Thee this day, believing Thou art ready to take it away. But grant, O

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Lord, that I may not be asking for healing of body when my soul is not at peace; that I may not be hoping for relief when my sin remains unconfessed and unforgiven; that I may not be expecting Thee to do everything when I have done nothing.

O Prince of Peace, I claim Thy gift of a tranquil heart, by faith in Thee!

O Provider of Pardon, I claim Thy gift of forgiveness, by faith in Thee!

O Promiser of Power, I claim Thy gift of strength, by faith in Thee!

Often I have been fearful as well as ignorant; often I have been weak as well as cynical. Do Thou, gracious Lord, put a new spirit within me, preserving my soul from shrinking under adversity, and saving me from the false piety of *over*-ready submission to Thy supposed will. Save me too, good Lord, from becoming morbid over my constant failures in love, and help me to seek the forgiveness which can set me on the right road again. Certainly I have not had the faith I should have had—yet if I have it now, I know Thou must have forgiven me. Bring that faith to full flower, Lord Jesus, through the daily devotion which I offer Thee; for Thy name's sake.

Amen.

✠

EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"If My people which are called by My name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will

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forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now Mine eyes shall be open, and Mine ears attentive unto the prayer that is made in this place."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in Thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is Thy Name,
I am all unrighteousness;
False and full of sin I am,
Thou art full of truth and grace."

✠

My Prayer

With thanks, heavenly Father, I acknowledge Thy healing presence within me, working to bring to fulfilment that vision of wholeness which is Thy purpose for me. I feel stronger and surer; I feel more hopeful and happy; I feel pardoned, and at peace. Praise to Thee, my Saviour!

For being "attentive unto the prayer that has been made in this place", I thank Thee, Father; for the Goodness which surrounds me, and the Life which pervades me; for the love and the patience in which I have been able to endure suffering and sorrow; for the blessed knowledge

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that nothing can ever separate me from Thy Love which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.

And I thank Thee, Holy Trinity, for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

✠

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FOURTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"AFTER this the Lord appointed others, seventy in number, and despatched them ahead of Him in pairs to every town and place that He Himself intended to visit . . . 'When you come to a town where they make you welcome, eat what is put before you, heal their sick and say, "The Kingdom of God has approached you."'"

"The Seventy came back to Him rejoicing. 'Lord,' they said, 'the use of your name brings the very demons under our control.'"

(St. Luke x.)

✠

My Thought For Today

It is strange how some people can still assert that healing was only a side-line in the disciples' ministry! But is it any less strange that there are those who regard the possibility of a personal healing through non-medical channels as very remote indeed? Perhaps *I* am one of such a group. If so, must I not re-discover the vital connection between wholeness and worship? Must I not re-discover that, by accepting the Word preached by these faithful disciples—and still preached today—I am a long way towards finding myself healed? Yes, in body as well as in soul?

As I know, there have even been cases of physical healing through services of worship conducted by radio. What, then, can I not expect by worshipping my Saviour here, in

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the privacy of my home or my bed? Might I not, for instance, find that my heart has opened itself to His forgiveness, and that that was all I needed to be cured of my functional illness? Might I not even find a new and more real experience of His Love for me, and so become free from those inner tensions and stresses which are prolonging, or even causing, my *organic* trouble?

It is fascinating to read that these disciples, who at first must have been a little hesitant at the very idea of healing in Jesus' name, returned to report that even devils (demons) were subject to His name. In other words, not even the most serious trouble known to man is outside the sway of Christ's power to heal. We today might not use the word "demon" to explain men's troubles, yet are we really much wiser today about the *ultimate* origin of men's worst afflictions? It is as true today, as in the early years of the Church, that the healing power of Christ avails for "*all* thy diseases". It avails for mine.

"It is more than possible," the disciples are reminding me, "that, through the use of the Lord's Name, you might well be able to bring your personal 'demon' under your control." How seriously, I wonder, have I thought of this possibility?

✠

My Prayer For Today

O Lord Christ, the Healer of men's sicknesses, I ask Thy forgiveness for putting limits on Thy power, and I ask for Thy strength for the renewal of faith within my heart, that I may earnestly believe that "*all* things are possible with Thee". O Lord, the demons of fear and despair are threatening to destroy me; deliver Thou me, Saviour Christ! The demons of pain and distress are threatening to subvert my desire to live; deliver Thou me, Saviour Christ!

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Help me, gracious Father, to know for a certainty that perfect health is Thy will for me, and for all Thy children; and grant that nothing might hinder those prayers of mine which may well be part of the channel along which Thy healing power could come.

Wilt Thou bless the work of healing going on in the world, whether it be the preaching of Thy Word, the treatment of men's minds, or the doctoring of men's bodies; whether it be by laying on of hands, by cheering the sick, or by the simple prayer of faith—for Thou, Lord, art the power behind all healing, and I give the glory to Thee alone.

Eternal God, Thou art Almighty, and I believe Thy power can heal me.

Eternal God, Thou art All-wise, and I believe Thou wilt heal me how and when Thou deemest best.

Eternal God, Thou art All-good, and I believe Thy favour is never withheld from me in sickness or in health.

Praise be to Thee, O Lord.

For my friends and acquaintances who are ill, I pray this day, Father. (*Silent prayer.*) Be with those confined to bed, and give them the promise and hope of walking again. Be with those in constant pain, and give them the promise and hope of liberty and peace. Be with those whose bodies are ill through disharmony of soul and give them the promise and hope of divine pardon and renewal of spirit.

For Thy Name's sake.

Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"THE men said: John the Baptist sent us to you with the question, 'Are You He that was coming'? Now this was a day when Jesus cured many people of their diseases and afflictions and of evil spirits, and bestowed the boon of sight on many blind men. So in reply to the messengers He said: 'Go and tell John what you saw and heard. The blind see once more; the lame walk; lepers are cleansed; the deaf hear; dead men are brought back to life; and beggars are proclaiming the Good News."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"*Send, Lord, by these to the sick and the dying,*
Speak to their hearts with a message of peace;
Comfort the sad who in weakness are lying,
Grant the departing a gentle release.

Raise, Lord, to health again those who have sickened;
Fair be their lives as the roses in bloom;
Give, of Thy grace, to the souls Thou hast quickened,
Gladness for sorrow and brightness for gloom."

✠

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My Prayer

I thank Thee, heavenly Father, that my expectation of wholeness is prompted not by selfish ends, but by the desire to give Thee the greater glory; that my love of Thee is not prompted by the hope of being loved, but by the Love which Thou art in Thyself. Grant that I may praise Thee in my sick body as well as in my spoken word, being preserved from resentment and rancour, and being lifted to the heights of faith from which I may see Thee not only as the Lover of my soul, but the Restorer of my flesh.

And accept now the thanksgiving of my heart, O God, for the quickening knowledge that Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever.

Amen.

✠

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FIFTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"By the sheep-gate in that city (Jerusalem) there is a pool with five arcades. . . . A number of disabled people, blind, lame, and withered, used to lie in these arcades; and there was a man there who had suffered from his trouble for thirty-eight years.

"Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing that he had been ill for a long time, said to him: 'Have you the will to become well again?' 'Sir,' said the sick man, 'I have no one to put me in the pool when the water is ruffled, and while I am on the way someone else gets in before me.' Jesus said: 'Rise, pick up your stretcher, and walk.' And immediately the man was cured, picked up his stretcher and walked. . .

"Later, Jesus came upon him in the Temple and said: 'See now, you have been cured. Sin no more, lest something worse befall you.'"

(St. John v.)

✠

My Thought For Today

Is it credible that anyone who *really* wanted to get into the "Pool with Five Arcades" should have failed to do so, year after year, for thirty-eight years!! Jesus clearly thought this man hadn't tried very hard. "Have you the will to become well again?" A strange question indeed—unless He was quite certain the man did not have the will to become well again.

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Here is a sober truth; a truth which explains a surprising number of failures in the realm of spiritual healing. Illness is frequently a means of escape from the necessity of facing up to life. Many are the patients who scold the healer for inefficiency, when the real trouble is that they themselves do not actually desire to be cured. Fantastic? No, indeed!

Must I not at least ask *myself* whether I don't get a certain amount of sympathy and limelight being ill, which I am unwilling to give up? The answer is probably that this doesn't apply to me—but there is no harm in asking the question, just in case. For there is a warning in this story even for me, and a reminder that my expressed wish to be healed *need* not correspond with my *real* feelings in the matter. Mustn't I at least examine my heart to see if, deep down, I do find it easier to face my physical handicap than the heavy demands which life *would* make upon me if I were well?

I think of the well-known story of a lady whose illness had been diagnosed as cancer—inoperable cancer. Later she was told the doctors had made a mistake, and that she was completely free of any disease. But, instead of receiving the news with joy (the normal reaction, surely!), she received it almost with resentment. To be told she was in good health was actually a bigger blow than to be told she was going to die!! Her own comment is revealing: "I cannot bear the thought of facing life again."

Maybe I am not a confirmed neurotic like the man of Bethesda—but if I took Jesus at his word, could I too not "rise . . . and walk"? Maybe I haven't exactly run away from life, but maybe I have lost the vision of a full and healthy life, and so have lost not just hope for myself, but faith in Christ.

It seems that Jesus caught this man's attitude just in time. For, if he had "sinned more" (i.e. continued in his cowardly attitude to life), a worse thing would have befallen

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him; yes, even a worse neurosis. Not that Jesus blamed him; but how could He view this man's spiritual plight with unconcern?

And He is deeply concerned about mine. He does not censure me when He says "Sin no more"—but I have to admit that I have committed the sin of unbelief, the sin of *too* ready submission, the sin of wanting things done the easy way. But He wants my faith; and He needs my intelligent co-operation, if my healing is to be of soul as well as body. How badly do I want to give these things to Him—now?

✠

My Prayer For Today

O Thou Who art the Strength of my life, forgive me that I have been so weak. O Thou Who art the Hope of my life, forgive me that I have so easily despaired. O Thou Who art the Goal of my life, forgive me that I have rested content with lesser things.

Gracious Lord, I have suffered much, but I praise Thee that Thou hast preserved within my soul the genuine desire to get well. I have prayed much, and praise Thee for the patience Thou hast given me to "continue instant in prayer" though little seems to happen to me. I have seen others getting well before me—but Thou hast graciously kept me from bitterness, and from the temptation to make my illness an escape from life. Praise be to Thee, O God!

Yet grant unto me, loving Spirit, that I might listen even more carefully to the Voice of the Eternal, my God; that I might pay even greater heed to Thy commands; that I might be enabled to follow all *Thy rules—and so find that health which is normal for true Christian manhood. Help me to regard sickness as an intrusion into Thy lovely world; help me to regard suffering as the evil which Christ came to conquer;*

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and, though Thou canst often use *it to fashion saintliness, preserve me from thinking that sickness is essential to Thy purpose.*

Thou, Father, seest me whole again; may my faith in Thee and my will to live help speed my salvation. Thou, Father, seest me as one re-created in Thine image: may it not be that my faults or my fears might frustrate that purpose of Thine.

For Jesus' sake.

Amen.

✠

EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Eternal, your God, and do what is right in His eyes, and pay heed to His commands and follow all His rules, then the Eternal promises never to inflict upon you any of the diseases He inflicted on the Egyptians; for He is the Eternal who heals you."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

" Jesus! the Name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

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He speaks, and, listening to His voice,
New life the dead receive,
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe."

✠

My Prayer

I feel Thy presence, loving Father; for which I thank Thee now.

I know Thy pardon, loving Father; for which I thank Thee now.

Thy healing power is doing its work of grace; to Thee be thanks.

Thy healing path is before me; to Thee be thanks.

For Thy loving protection, O Saviour, praise be to Thee.

For Thy loving promise, O Saviour, praise be to Thee.

Thy wondrous pity is even for me; for which I praise Thee this night.

Thy wondrous perfection is all my hope; for which I praise Thee now.

And may Thy Blessing—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—be upon me, and upon all who taste the sharpness of pain, now and evermore.

Amen.

✠

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SIXTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"Now one of the noblemen at court had a son lying sick at Capernaum. Hearing that Jesus had moved from Judaea into Galilee, this man sought Him out and begged Him to come down from Cana and cure his son, who was at the point of death. Jesus said: 'Will nothing but the sight of miracles and portents make you believe?' 'Sir,' said the nobleman, 'come down before my child is dead.' 'You can go back,' said Jesus. 'Your son is living.' And the man set out, convinced that he had heard the truth from Jesus.

"As he was travelling down he was met by his servants with the news that his boy was living; and he asked them when he had got better. 'The fever left him yesterday,' they said, 'at noon.' Whereupon the father realised that this had happened at the very time when Jesus said to him: 'Your son is living.' And he and his whole family believed."

(St. John iv.)

✠

My Thought For Today

This account reads very much like the story of the Centurion's servant, but the distinctiveness of this story in St. John is pronounced enough to give its special message of comfort—and of challenge—to me.

How fervent, in the first place, was this distracted father's

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cry to the Saviour of men! His willingness to "seek Jesus out"—instead of vaguely hoping that He *might* come and do something—is a lesson in itself. For, have I sought Him out anxiously enough; in prayer, for instance? or in the Bible? or in the ministrations of my doctor or clergyman? For He is there, in every case, just waiting to yield to the persistence of faith.

Christ's first reaction to the nobleman is perhaps easy to understand, for He had been thronged by people who had little other motive for attending to Him than the hope to see Him do something really sensational. "Will nothing but the sight of miracles and portents make you believe?" "That's all most people seem to care about." The stricken father didn't stop to argue with Christ. But he made it perfectly plain that his love for his son was far greater than his desire for a mere miracle for miracle's sake. And that's all Jesus wanted to know. "You can go back. Your son is living."

That's exactly what Christ says to me when He sees my love to be greater than my curiosity. When I request help for my own illness, if He sees that I have even the makings of faith in His power to heal, as distinct from the mere desire to see a miracle done in me—He is only too ready to help me. Yet, when He does speak the word, promising me healing (and doesn't the whole Bible proclaim that promise!), do I always "set out, convinced that I have heard the truth from Jesus"? This man did, and what a wonderful fulfilment of faith was waiting for him when he got home!

Is it so very remarkable that this man's son began to get better from the moment Jesus spoke the word? Haven't millions of men and women begun to get better immediately the Word of God found an entrance into their hearts? The really important question for me seems to be this: Do I genuinely believe that I can begin to get better—in

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body *and* in soul—when I hear the word of promise and power spoken to my heart?

✠

My Prayer For Today

Lord Christ, Who art present in all places, yet unknown to so many of Thy people, I rejoice this day that Thou art ever ready to hear the prayer of faith.

Teach me, gracious Saviour, to lay all my troubles before Thee knowing that, until I so do, Thou mayest not be able to help me.

Teach me, gracious Sustainer, to trust myself more readily and more lovingly to Thy care, and so find my trust leads to Thy Peace.

Teach me, gracious Sovereign, to dedicate my will more zealously to Thine, and enter that service which is perfect freedom.

In the light of Thy Love for men who are loveless, I adore Thee this day. In the light of Thy faith in men who are faithless, I adore Thee, Saviour Christ. In the light of Thy promise towards men whose lives seem almost without promise, I adore Thee, O my God. Grant that my adoration may not be marred by petitions which would shame Thy purpose; grant that my desires and delights may be in accordance with Thy will; and grant that my sufferings and my sighings may never hide Thee from me. For Thy Name's sake.

Prosper Thine own sacred work of healing not just in me but in the whole company of those who are bound together in the fellowship of infirmity. Hear my prayer especially for those whom I love, and whose names I bring

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lovingly before Thee now. (*Silent prayer.*) Bless them each one, Father.

Amen.

✠

EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"THE Father loves the Son and shows Him all He does Himself. Moreover, to make you marvel, He will show Him greater deeds than these that you have seen. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so does the Son give life to whom He will."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"Yet Thou my shield and glory art,
Th' uplifter of my head.
I cried, and, from His holy hill,
The Lord me answer made.

I laid me down and slept, I wak'd;
For God sustained me.
I will not fear though thousands ten
Set round against me be."

✠

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My Prayer

For the lovely, good, and true things that have meant much to me these past days, I thank Thee, heavenly Father; for the Love which has been constantly directed towards me, the Light which has been constantly shining upon me, and the Life which has been constantly surging through me—and for the sense of forgiveness which has brought peace to my soul.

I thank Thee, good Lord, for the promise that I shall be shown greater deeds than those Thou hast performed already in me, and for the comfort that "the Son giveth life to whom He will". For the measure in which that promise and that comfort have been fulfilled in my body and soul, I render Thee praise, Healing Spirit!

For Thy nearness to me, and my nearness to Thee; for Thy love to me, and my love to Thee; for Thy faith in me, and my faith in Thee, I thank Thee, O my God!

Amen.

✠

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SEVENTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"THEY came to Bethsaida, and the people brought Him a blind man and besought Him to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. Then, after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked: 'Can you distinguish anything?' The man looked up and said: 'I can distinguish the men, for I see them like trees, walking about.'

"He then put His hands once more on his eyes, and the man saw clearly. His sight had been restored and he could now distinguish even distant objects well."

(St. Mark viii.)

✠

My Thought For Today

So many of Christ's miracles of healing have to do with the restoring of sight to the blind, and most of them are recorded twice or three times in the different Gospels. But here is one which is nowhere except in St. Mark. Is this just coincidence, I wonder?

Probably the answer is "No". For whereas in the other healings of blindness Christ restores His patients' sight at once, here it is done in stages; and none of the other Gospel writers (who, of course, wrote *after* Mark) thought it advisable to include it in case it suggested any insult to Christ's power. If this is so, it seems a pity; for is it really any less marvellous that a man should be cured gradually

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than immediately? *I* may be one who is tempted to think so. Yet Christ refuses to conform to pattern. He knows best; and maybe *my* cure is best in stages.

As far as the blind man was concerned, maybe Christ was influenced by the possibility that the glare of the Eastern sun might have damaged the eyes again if the cure had been immediate—in which case His Wisdom is pinpointed as wonderfully as His Power. If *I* were cured suddenly, is it possible that there might be loss as well as gain? Maybe not. But maybe I might be spiritually unprepared for a sudden bodily healing, and use my cure for selfish purposes; whereas by the spiritual discipline of constant prayer I am almost guaranteeing myself a cure which will be used "to the greater glory of God". The possibility is at least worth considering.

One thing I certainly must note, for my comfort—something much more important than the question why He used saliva—namely, the fact that Christ insisted upon a complete cure. He does not do things by half-measures. Yet so many people think their partial cure is all they're going to get. And by so doing they may well frustrate Christ in His desire to complete it. Let me see to it that *I* do not do that! Christ wills me to be whole. But do *I* really want to be?

✠

My Prayer For Today

O Lord Jesus Christ, Thy ways are often mysterious, yet Thy will is perfectly plain; Thy power is often unfelt, yet Thy promise shines forth as the stars; Thy likeness in me is often effaced, yet Thy love for me is always directed my way. Help me, Saviour, to be more trusting in Thy wisdom, anticipating only that which is good; help me,

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Saviour, to hope even when there seems to be no help; and grant me to surrender to Thee every unworthy thought and every damaging emotion. For Thine own Name's sake.

There are many of my friends, O God, who bring me before Thee in prayer, and beseech Thee to touch me. Some of them wish me to be cured as earnestly as I do. Open my heart, Lord, to the atmosphere of that love. Grant even that it may serve as the oil of Thy healing power; and grant that my own selflessness and devotion may further invite the presence of that same power.

O Thou Light of men's bodies, shine even now into the fibres of my flesh and open the windows of my soul to Thy rays!

O Thou Truth of men's minds, present Thyself with power to the eyes of my understanding, and may I accept it with joy!

O Thou End of men's souls, make me more and more sensitive to Thy perfect Holiness, that I may distinguish even the "distant object" of Thine eternal Kingdom.

And unto Thee be praise.

Wilt Thou open my eyes, Father of all mankind, to the many different needs of Thy suffering people. Help me to see that my prayers for myself are of greatest avail when I have prayed also for others. So take my requests now as a genuine expression of my love for those whom I name in the silence of my heart. (*Silent prayer.*) Forgive their sins, and forgive mine, O God. Make them whole, and make me whole, O Christ.

Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"SAY to them that are of a fearful heart: Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come . . . and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing . . . And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near;
O may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes.

Watch by the sick; enrich the poor
With blessings from Thy boundless store;
Be every mourner's sleep to-night,
Like infant's slumbers, pure and light."

✠

My Prayer

O Thou Who dost command me to "be strong and fear not", because "my God will come and save me", I thank

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Thee this night for the Strength which has transformed my weakness, and the Love which has cast out my fear—and I praise Thee that Thou hast indeed come in power, and saved me. I thank Thee, Saviour Christ, that Thou hast made me to see clearly with the eyes of faith. Thou hast lit up my soul and bestowed upon me that Peace which I still cannot fully understand, but which I cherish as one of Thy greatest blessings.

O Dayspring on High, it is not night if Thou be near!
O Lord of All Being, I am nothing if Thou be *not* near!
O Giver of All Good, I have no need if Thou be near!
Praise be to Thee, Father, for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

✠

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EIGHTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"THEY came to the Gerasenes' country on the far side of the Sea, and He had no sooner disembarked than a man with an unclean spirit came out from the tombs and confronted Him. This man lived in the sepulchres and had reached a stage when no one could control him, even by the use of chains. Now, seeing Jesus from afar, he ran up, fell at His feet and cried in a loud voice: 'What is your business with me, Jesus, Son of God the Highest? I adjure you by God not to torment me.' For Jesus had been saying to him: 'Unclean spirit, come out of that man.'

"'What is your name?' Jesus asked him. 'My name is Legion,' he replied; 'for there are many of us.' There was a large herd of pigs feeding on the mountainside, and the spirits begged Him to send them among the pigs. He gave them leave, and the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs, with the result that the herd . . . charged down the cliff into the sea. . .

"Their herdsmen fled and brought the news to the town and countryside; and the people . . . approached Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, dressed and in his right mind—the very man who had had the legion in him. As Jesus was stepping into the boat, the man who had been possessed begged Him to let him stay with Him. But Jesus . . . said to him: 'Go home now to your own people, and tell them what great things the Lord God has done for you, and the mercy He showed you.'"

(St. Mark v.)

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My Thought For Today

This story, better than any other in the New Testament, shows how false it is to claim that Jesus never bothered to find out the exact nature of the troubles He cured. He suited His technique to the patient; He refused (in *this* case) simply to lay hands on him, and put all the responsibility of being cured on the patient himself—which, I fear, is what many faith-healers do today. Jesus cures always by the most appropriate method; the one which offers the best guarantee of a permanent cure: for even His healings can be undone through man's lack of co-operation.

Many a trouble can be healed by suggestion—and Christ uses this method often; but when He tried it on this demented man, it was clear that He was not able to have the necessary personal relationship, without which suggestion is obviously fruitless. And so, after spending half the night with him (doing what doctors would call diagnosing), Christ gets the man to see that his whole personality is "shot through by conflicting interests and drives"—which is what the Bible means by "unclean spirits".

The actual story of *how* the unclean spirits were driven out is unimportant compared with the simple fact that they *were* driven out. The ex-demoniac was found by a very surprised group of people to be "sitting there, and in his right mind". Which perhaps is a picture not so remote from my own experience. For, though I don't suffer from split-personality, do I not recognise that my personality is far from being whole? And do I not know, in my heart, that this spiritual disharmony and dispeace has no small effect upon my physical trouble?

This much I must know: that the Christ Who heals the

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mind is the same Christ Who heals the body. And if I let Him possess me, there is little chance that evil will possess either my body or my mind. How fervently am I begging Him now to "send my unclean spirits among the pigs"?

✠

My Prayer For Today

O Saviour Christ, Thou Who hast compassion upon men's sicknesses of body, mind, and soul, I acknowledge this day that I am whole in no part of me. Grant me, Lord, relief for the pains of my body; resolution for the discords of my mind; and refreshment for the aridness of my soul. And make me alive, O God, not just to the possibility, or even the promise, of healing, but also to the healing power itself. For Thy Name's sake.

O Perfect Holiness, forgive, and cast out, all that is coarse and unclean in me.

O Perfect Humanity, forgive, and cast out, all that is mean and carnal in me.

O Perfect Health, forgive, and cast out, all that is evil and incomplete in me.

I pray this day for those of my fellow-sufferers who are grievously ill in their minds; for those without the kindly light of reason—that they may soon "sit there, dressed, and in their right minds"; for those who have become perverted in their thinking—that they may soon find the Truth which sets men free; for those who lie in mental homes—that they may understand at least something of Thy peace.

Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"You know how the message spread over the whole of Judaea, starting from Galilee . . . how God consecrated Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Spirit and power, and how He went about doing good and curing all who were harassed by the devil; for God was with Him."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"*Just as I am, though tossed about*
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,—
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come."

✠

My Prayer

Thanks be unto Thee, O God, that Thou hast consecrated Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Spirit and power, that He

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went about curing all who were harassed by the devil, that He promises healing even to me, Thy servant.

Praise be Thine, O Saviour Christ, that Thou hast cast out the demon of fear and replaced it by the grace of faith; that Thou hast cast out the demon of despair and replaced it by the grace of hope; that Thou hast cast out the demon of self-concern and replaced it by the grace of love. And I thank Thee, Lamb of God, for the forgiveness so freely offered to me, and which I see now as the earnest of my bodily healing.

For knowing Thee as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and for the grace, mercy, and peace Thou hast bestowed upon me, I thank Thee, O God.

Amen.

✠

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NINTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"ONE day Jesus was teaching and in full possession of the healing power of God, when some men arrived, carrying on a couch a paralytic whom they wanted to bring in and lay down before Him. But the house was so packed with people that they could not see a way to get him in. So they went up on the roof, and through the tiles let him down into the middle of the gathering, couch and all, at Jesus' feet.

"Seeing their faith, Jesus said: 'Man, your sins have been forgiven you.' The Doctors of the Law and the Pharisees began to turn this over in their minds. 'Who is this blaspheming?' they said. 'Who can forgive sins but God alone?' Jesus, aware of their thoughts, said: 'What are you thinking to yourselves? Which is the easier thing, to say "Your sins have been forgiven you", or to say "Get up and walk"? However, to teach you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—and He turned to the paralysed man—'I say to you, Get up, take your couch, and walk home.'

"The man rose immediately in view of the people, picked up the couch he had been lying on, and went home praising God. They were all dumbfounded and praised God in their awe. 'We never thought', they said, 'to see what we have seen today.'"

(St. Luke v.)

✠

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My Thought For Today

How eloquent this story is, of Christ's power not only over sickness, but also over sin! Why, I wonder, did the evangelist write this story down? Was he more interested in the physical miracle than anything else? I hardly think so. St. Luke tells me this story now so that I might believe not just in the possibility of a physical cure, but also in Christ's authority to forgive those sins in me which may be hindering that cure.

Here was a man who became cured because he had been brought into a new spiritual relationship with the Lord of life. It was as easy (or as difficult?) as that. The curative factor was the forgiveness of sins. And how often that is the case. There are thousands today—maybe I am one?—who could get up and walk if they could only believe, and accept the forgiveness of sin so freely offered in His Word. Nothing is more important as far as Healing Through Worship is concerned than the claiming of this forgiveness. Must I not at least ask myself whether I have done just that?

There are those who ridicule the very idea that this Man of Nazareth has power to forgive sin. These are the same people who ridicule the idea that He has the power to heal a man by non-physical means. Yet, He Forgives Today, and He Heals Today! The two operations are really one.

Maybe I don't disbelieve His power to forgive sin—yet maybe I am reserved about the idea of His forgiving me mine. Maybe I am conscious of some unforgiven sin. Maybe my sense of guilt has caused paralysis—of spirit or mind, if not of body? It's even possible that I have—like this man—some complex (serious or slight), which has seeped right through into my unconscious mind. It's even possible that my illness relieves me of the necessity of facing up to my guilt. If so: should I not, and can I not,

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tune my ears to the voice which is whispering this moment: "Man, your sins have been forgiven you"? For if I do this, may I not find that I too will be able to get up, take my couch, and walk home?

✠

My Prayer For Today

Lord Christ, my guilt is small compared with Thy glory; my faults are trivial compared with Thy forgiveness; my straits fade into insignificance beside Thy strength. Yet, if I do not honestly recognise my weakness, I may still remain unaware of Thy power. So grant me courage, O Lord, to see and deplore the worst in myself, but preserve me from failing to see and adore the Best in Thee. Cast out all my faulty reactions to life, my foolish resistance to love, my faithless refusal of liberty, and open the doors of my heart to receive Thy Healing Spirit, O King of Heaven!

I feel Thee dwelling within me, Spirit of life—even though I am preventing Thee from doing the great work which is Thy End. For the way in which the love and prayers of others have winged Thy love towards me, I rejoice this day. For the great fellowship of devotion throughout the world, I thank Thee, Father. For the faithful labour of physicians and nurses and all those dedicated to the cause of Healing, I offer Thee my praise.

I have been often forgetful of Thy great Promises, O God; but I know, in my heart, that the "prayer of faith will restore the sick man, and that the Lord will raise him up". Help me to claim that Promise for myself—now. I know, O God, that even the sins I have committed will be forgiven me. Help me to claim that Promise for myself —now.

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Let me not desire good for myself without desiring it also for others. And let Thy blessing rest upon me, and upon all others who know that *nothing* will separate them from Thy love which is Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

✠

EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"THE prayer of faith will restore the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; even the sins he has committed will be forgiven him."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"O word of hope, to raise us nearer heaven,
When courage fails us, and when faith is dim;
The souls for whom Christ prays to Christ are given,
To find their pardon and their joy in Him.

O Intercessor, who art ever living
To plead for dying souls that they may live,
Teach us to know our sin which needs forgiving,
Teach us to know the love which can forgive."

✠

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My Prayer

Thanks be to Thee, my Saviour, that, in spite of my faults and my fears, Thy love has been with me in the hours of this day that are now gone. Thanks be Thine for the least of Thy gifts which I have enjoyed, and for those of which I have not even been aware. But especially for the healing and forgiving grace of Christ, I render my deepest praise this night.

Thou hast been alive in me, Gracious Spirit; now Thou hast taken firmer hold of me, as I have taken firmer hold of Thee. May I thank Thee this night and every night for the faith which is Thy gift, and which Thou hast ordained shall gain the victory.

Now I feel more at peace: thanks be to thee, Father.
Now I feel more loving: thanks be to Thee, Father.
Now I feel more alive: thanks be to Thee, Father.
Amen.

✠

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TENTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"DURING His stay in one of the cities, there suddenly appeared a man who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus he prostrated himself in supplication: 'Lord,' he said, 'if you will, you can cleanse me.' Jesus stretched out His hand, touched him, and said: 'I will it. Be cleansed.' And the leprosy left him immediately.

"Jesus ordered him to tell no one. 'But go and show yourself to the priest,' He said, 'and make the offering for your purification which Moses prescribed, so that the people might be notified.' Yet Jesus' fame was more than ever blazed abroad, and large crowds gathered to hear Him and to be cured of their infirmities. . . .'"

(St. Luke v.)

✠

My Thought For Today

How significant is the phrase "prostrated himself"! Here was a man who had the right spirit about being healed. No half-measures; no feelings that he *deserved* to be healed; no wrong ideas about leaving everything to Him. First, this man *worshipped*: and who can deny that this is the ideal preliminary to healing?

It is clear how powerfully this man's worship was charged with faith. "Lord, if you will, you can cleanse me." Is that my attitude too, or is my worship charged with doubt? It has been amply shown in modern methods of

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non-physical healing, that an amazing percentage of cures has taken place largely through the creating or nourishing of a genuine desire to get well. Just *how* genuinely do I desire to get well? Is it even a remote possibility that my failure to be healed is somehow connected with my subconscious desire to stay unwell—and so avoid the normal challenges of life?

Christ's response to the leper's worshipful attitude is typical, and encouraging. "I will it, be cleansed." Yes, he was healed with a word. Does this seem too fantastic to me? Yet it happens often today. People with a sense of injustice frequently develop skin troubles—troubles which disappear immediately this attitude is changed. Did not Job develop a skin disease after the shock of losing his material possessions? The first step to healing is the same today as then: worship. "He prostrated himself."

The sequel to the story is interesting too. "Go and show yourself to the priest"—which at least contains the idea that this man was to *worship* after his healing. Why? Because worship is not just a channel of healing; it is also a means of prevention. Was it not God's original desire—*is* it not His desire now—that, by staying close to Him at all times, a man need never be ill? That possibility is not to be under-estimated. And when I am healed of my present ailment, I shall not forget that possibility.

✠

My Prayer For Today

Lord Christ, Who canst heal with a word, I feel almost an outcast from the normal life of the world, and beseech Thee to cleanse me. Thou knowest the sadness of pain and affliction—indeed, Thou art bearing some of my pain, and enduring some of my sorrow now. Grant that I may

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not hinder by doubt or fear or blatant unbelief the healing Thou art waiting to work within me.

I would pray, Lord, not just for the continuance of Thy healing power in me—but also in others. Be with the sick in mind or body or soul, especially those known to me. Be with those who feel their ailment makes them exiles from the love of their fellows; and give them to know Thou not only willest their health, but canst indeed make them clean. Prosper the ministrations of doctors and nurses, and bless the prayers of the faithful wherever they may be. (*Silent prayer.*)

This day, O Lord, Thou hast given me grace to endure and to hope.

This day, O Lord, Thou hast moved within me and touched my heart.

This day, O Lord, Thou hast helped me to trust and to pray. Grant now that, in the days to come, I may have patience and courage and faith, and find the fulfilment of Thy promise to heal drawing nearer and nearer.

In all the worship of my soul, Father, help me continually to seek Thee before Thy benefits, to pray for others even before myself, to ask for more power rather than for less pain; and may Thy name be glorified both now and always.

Amen.

✠

EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"He was despised and shunned by men; a man of pain, who knew what sickness was . . . and yet ours was the pain He bore, the sorrow He endured! He was wounded

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because we had sinned, 'twas for our welfare that He was chastised; the blows that fell to Him have brought us healing."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"*Thine arm, O Lord, in days of old,*
Was strong to heal and save;
It triumphed o'er disease and death,
O'er darkness and the grave.
To Thee they went—the blind, the dumb,
The palsied, and the lame,
The leper with his tainted life,
The sick with fevered frame.

Be Thou our great Deliverer still,
Thou Lord of life and death;
Restore and quicken, soothe and bless,
With Thine almighty breath;
To hands that work and eyes that see
Give wisdom's heavenly lore,
That whole and sick, and weak and strong,
May praise Thee evermore."

✠

My Prayer

Thanks be to Thee, Lord, for preserving me from the sin of thanklessness, and from all those sins of self-concern

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and self-reliance and self-righteousness which frustrate the working of Thy healing Spirit. For the Light which has dispelled much of my darkness; for the Love which has cast out so much of my fear; for the Life which has saved me from death—I praise Thee this night, my God.

For every kindness done to me recently; for the company of loving souls; and for the heartfelt prayers of my friends-in-Christ, I thank Thee, good Lord. And for the picture of sound health which I carry in my mind, and which is not only my goal but Thine, I offer Thee the gratitude of my heart, Eternal God.

Now praise be to Thee for that peace which passes understanding, but which is within me, by Thy Grace.

Amen.

✠

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ELEVENTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"THEY now brought Him a man whom a demon had made blind and dumb. He cured him, and the dumb man spoke and saw. All the people were astounded. 'Can this be David's son?' they asked. But when the Pharisees heard, they said: 'If the man casts demons out, it is only through Beelzebub their Prince.'

"But Jesus, who knew what they were thinking, said to them: 'If I cast out demons through Beelzebub, through whom do your own people cast them out? You stand condemned by *them*. On the other hand, if I cast out demons through the Spirit of God, it would seem that the Kingdom of God confronts you.'"

(St. Matthew xii.)

✠

My Thought For Today

Christ's contemporaries obviously believed that illness was caused by demons, evil spirits which filled the atmosphere. In some ways this is quite a convenient belief, since it seems to relieve man of the responsibility of being well. Today, in fact, men don't use the word demon, but don't they regard a germ in very much the same way? Do *I* not tend to put the blame on germs rather than on my own imprudence or ignorance, forgetting that a large proportion of illnesses are caused from within? As has been said: "Germs are only accessories after the fact", i.e.—they

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derive their power to harm us from *our* weakness. Isn't it when we are below par that we catch a cold so easily?

It has been claimed that this blind and dumb man was afflicted with a purely emotional form of these ailments. Would this, if true, reduce the wonder of Christ's power? Not at all. Plainly, the doctors and religious men of the time were powerless to do anything, which is one reason why they tried to minimise the cure when it was performed so graciously and so swiftly by the Lord of Grace. They claimed that Christ cast out evil *by* evil—a stupid argument, which Christ was quick to point out to them.

No, Christ's power, which is so unmistakably demonstrated here, is the power of Good—the power which is eternally directed *against* evil in all its forms, including sickness. Demons exist only to be cast out; sickness exists only to be healed. "If I cast out demons through the Spirit of God," Jesus says, "it would seem that the Kingdom of God confronts you."

How true that is! Wherever His Spirit is at work, God's Kingdom is there. It is here, in my generation. It is here in my heart, for has He not cast out the "demons" of resentment and fear, even if not the "demons" of disease and pain? And this is just the first fruits of His power working within me. For He has promised to overcome evil with good. But it is for me to help Him this far: not just to believe that He can cure my infirmity, but to believe that He will.

✠

My Prayer For Today

O Thou Light of men, I confess my blindness to the full glory of Thy power, and pray Thee to open the eyes of my understanding to acknowledge Thee unreservedly as the Son of God with power.

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O Thou Word of God, I confess that I have stood dumb before the clear revelation of Thy Love towards me, as declared in the Gospel, and pray Thee to open my mouth, that I might show forth Thy praise.

Bless the doctors and surgeons of our land; and help me to have greater confidence in mine.

Bless the scientists and chemists of our land; and help me to be grateful for any healing agency they may discover.

Bless all faith-healers and preachers of the Faith; and help me to know and to feel the power they seek to proclaim.

Bless those who watch by the sick and pray for their wholeness; and help me to be uplifted by the love of my own friends.

For Christ's sake.

Hear me, Father, as I pray for those who suffer from the great affliction of blindness; grant that as they pray for light for the body, they may give thanks for the light of the soul. Bless those who suffer from the great affliction of dumbness; grant that as they pray for the opening of their mouths, they may give thanks for the opening of their hearts. (*Silent prayer.*) Be with the pained in body, and those who are sick in mind; be with those who have convinced themselves there is no betterment for them, and with those who have foolishly come to believe in their sickness as a punishment sent from Thee; and be with those of my personal friends who know neither wholeness of body nor of soul—and grant that the love of these my prayers may be taken up into Thy great Love and used for their healing. (*Silent prayer.*)

Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"EVENING came, and they brought Him a number of people possessed by evil spirits. He cast out the spirits with a word, and He healed all those who were sick: so that the words spoken through the Prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: He took our infirmities on Himself and bore our diseases."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"*A safe stronghold our God is still,*
A trusty shield and weapon;
He'll help us clear from all the ill
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The ancient prince of hell
Hath risen with purpose fell;
Strong mail of craft and power
He weareth in this hour;
On earth is not his fellow.

And were this world all devils o'er,
And watching to devour us,
We lay it not to heart so sore;
Not they can overpower us.

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And let the prince of ill
Look grim as e'er he will,
He harms us not a whit;
For why his doom is writ;
A word shall quickly slay him."

✠

My Prayer

For the Victory of Thy Cross over the power of evil, I thank Thee, O God! For the liberating power of the Gospel, and the peace it has brought to my heart; for the liberating power of Thy Spirit, and the healing it has brought to my flesh—I give Thee praise and honour, my Lord and my God!

Thou, Saviour, art near to me—and dear to me;
Thou, Father, lovest me—and I love Thee;
for which I thank Thee this night.

For the eventual triumph of Good over Evil, and for the token of that triumph already in me;

For the eventual triumph of Right over Wrong, and for the token of that triumph already in me;

For the eventual triumph of Love over Hate, and for the token of that triumph already in me—I praise thy saving Name.

Amen.

✠

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TWELFTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"Now there came a man called Jairus, a governor of the synagogue, who threw himself down at Jesus' feet and besought Him to come to his house because he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, who was dying.

". . . (then) someone from the synagogue official's house came up and said: 'Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Master.' But Jesus heard and said to Jairus: 'Do not be afraid. Only have faith, and she shall be saved.'

"When He reached the house He allowed no one to go in with Him but Peter, John, and James, and the father and mother of the girl. They were all wailing and beating their breasts for her. But He said: 'Wail no more. She is not dead but asleep.' They laughed at Him, knowing that she was dead. But He seized her hand and cried: 'Little girl, get up!'

"Her spirit returned, she rose immediately, and He ordered her some food."

(St. Luke viii.)

✠

My Thought For Today

How is it that there are people who try to explain this story by denying that the child was dead? Is it true that, after all, the healing power of Christ is limited? Perish the thought! as the Apostle might say.

Everyone knew she was dead—including Jesus; His

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words "she is not dead but sleepeth" cannot be taken to refute what all present saw clearly to be the case. He meant simply that the little girl's death was not irrevocable. If we can bring back someone to life by artificial respiration—as often happens in cases of drowning—is it reasonable to doubt Christ's power to infuse life again into an inert body? If a doctor can cut through flesh to reach a heart that has stopped, and, by gently squeezing it, cause it to start beating again, is it too much to suppose that He who has conquered death can raise the dead to life?

Yet, like Jairus, I have been afraid and lacked faith. Whether actually near to death or not, I have laughed at the very prospect of finding relief from my particular complaint. I have forgotten how, in the past, I "called for help to Thee, and Thou hast caused me to recover". I have spurned God's own promise to me.

Even supposing I do die? What then? Is that the end? "No!" cries Paul; "for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed . . . for this mortal *must* put on immortality." I know in my heart that those who have this kind of faith actually have the best chance of recovery in this life. I know that by leaving my sickness in His hands, lovingly and trustingly, there is a far better chance of finding new strength than if I despair and become resentful. Yet, can I make this act of faith? Indeed I can! For is not God the God of Love? And is not Christ the Lord of Life?

✠

My Prayer For Today

O Risen Lord, I am cast down! O Mighty King, I am subject to Thee! O Saviour Christ, I need deliverance! Hear me as I pray Thee now to work within my heart.

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Teach me to listen to the Voice which whispers in my ear "Do not be afraid. Only have faith"—and help me to recognise its authority. Inspire me to remember those times past when Thou hast called me back to life from the grave beneath, and may this recognition of past mercies help me to lay hold more firmly upon Thy great promises for the future.

In all my suffering and pain, Gracious Father, give me the prayerful support of my friends—casting out from them, as well as from me, that attitude which restricts the flow of Thy healing waters. And grant that I may never become so self-centred as to forget to pray for others who suffer as much as, or even more than, I do.

Thou lovest us at all times, Father; yet, if we love others, Thy love to us is bound *to be more real. Thou desirest to heal us, Father; yet, if we fervently desire the healing of others, our spirits are* bound *to tune in more easily to the healing waves of heaven. Thou holdest out to us the offer of forgiveness, even before we do wrong; yet, if we are always ready to forgive others, we are* bound *to know the wonder and power of that forgiveness. So make us turn from self to others—and to Thee.*

Grant now that I may cast fewer shadows across Thy light—the shadows of unbelief and fearfulness and despair. Grant now that I may put fewer barriers in the way of Thy love—the barriers of resentment and peevishness and self-concern. And grant me to know that nothing—neither death, nor life—can separate me from Thee, my Lord and my God.

Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"O THOU Eternal, my God, I called for help to Thee, and Thou hast caused me to recover, lifting me up . . . from the world below, calling me back to life from the grave beneath."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation;*
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation;
All ye who hear,
Now to His temple draw near,
Joining in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shieldeth thee gently from harm, or when fainting sustaineth;
Hast thou not seen
How thy heart's wishes have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?"

✠

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My Prayer

O Thou who art health and salvation, I thank Thee for the presence of Thy life-giving Spirit in my heart now.

O Thou who art King of creation, I thank Thee for bringing peace out of confusion, and hope out of despair.

O Thou who art our Shield and Sustainer, I thank Thee for the Love which has upheld me even unto this night, and the Love which promises to uphold me in life or in death.

For calling me back to new strength of body, I give Thee thanks; but, even more, I thank Thee for calling me back to a new strength of soul. And I thank Thee for the confidence which I feel now that I shall be able to live from now on in that strength—looking unto Him Who is the Author and Finisher of faith, and the Dispeller of fear.

And to Thee be glory and praise, forever.

Amen.

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THIRTEENTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

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The Lord's Power

"THERE was a woman who for twelve years had suffered from a haemorrhage. She had undergone much at the hands of many physicians and had spent all her resources to no good purpose—in fact she had gone from bad to worse.

"Now, having heard the stories about Jesus, she came up from behind through the crowd and touched His cloak, for she had been thinking: 'If I can only touch His clothes I shall be saved.' On the instant, her haemorrhage was staunched and she could feel that she was cured of the affliction.

"She came and fell at His feet and told Him the whole truth. Whereupon He said: 'Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go now in peace; and be rid of your affliction.'"

(St. Mark v.)

✠

My Thought For Today

Is there a flavour of magic in this vivid picture of an instantaneous healing? Emphatically not! The woman was not healed by the clothes—but by the Wearer, through confidence in Him. Yet there is always a danger of adopting this magical attitude to healing. True, people were healed in the first century with the help of handkerchiefs brought from the Apostle Paul, but the method was not encouraged. "Although this method has brought results," writes Elsie

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H. Salmon, "for several reasons I do not encourage it. I prefer the recognised method of laying on of hands, prayer, and faith."

This woman clearly had faith of some sort, but it cannot have been Christian faith as I know it. Was it merely a case of suggestion? If so, it was still the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes. Perhaps a disciple had told her of Jesus; and is it so surprising that this report about the Good News should have awakened expectation in the woman's heart? Has *my* faith in Jesus not come, in large measure, through a simple preaching of His Word to me, or in a simple act of worship such as I am making now?

I come with what faith I have, in any case. And if I come, unlike this woman, with a rich faith and not simply as a last resort, it is not with the attitude of "Well, if *she* was healed, surely *I'll* be healed"; for I acknowledge that healings are possible without faith, and that healings are seemingly denied even where faith is ardent. I refuse to test my faith by results—for God's purposes are often mysterious, but never unloving.

It's true that I too have undergone much at the hands of my physicians, but I am not to regard this story as a slight upon the medical profession. Maybe, without them, I would be even worse. And if I had had more confidence in them, maybe I would have been better. Whichever is the case, I must try to bring Christ now not the remains of my faith but faith in full flower; not the spent fragments of my vigour and my hope, but the full power of my spirit.

This woman was cured on the instant; but I must resist the temptation to expect Christ to heal by the same pattern every time. It's my privilege to pray in faith for healing; it's His privilege to heal in the way He thinks best. And I believe He will do it—soon.

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My Prayer For Today

O Thou Who art the Great Physician of my body, and the Wonderful Saviour of my soul, forbid it that any trial of body or of soul might make me less confident of Thy mercy and less sure of Thy love. Hold Thou the vision of wholeness and peace before me; and, when I have attained unto it, make my heart sing with praise and with joy, for Thy name's sake.

O God of compassion, bless those of my fellow-sufferers who have undergone much at the hands of many physicians, and seem to feel no betterment. Keep them from resentment—as Thou hast kept me; keep them from despair—as Thou hast kept me; and keep them from cynicism—as Thou hast kept me. And, as my love goes out to them in prayer and concern, may Thy love come into me and make me even more loving.

For those who are praying for me—and for fellow-sufferers—I pray, O God; for all healers who, in different ways, are ministers of Thy redeeming power to men; for those who preach the Word of Forgiveness and Love, that this Word might be received in faith, and be a refreshment to the body as well as to the soul. And I pray for those who seek Thee only as a last resort, that, in finding a cure for their bodies, they may also find a resting-place for their souls.

If I have done any wrong since last I prayed, forgive me, Lord; and may my sense of forgiveness give power to my ship of faith, that it may arrive safely in the longed-for haven.

For Jesus' sake.

Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"THEY cried to the Eternal in their need, to save them from their evil plight. He stilled the storm to a whisper, till the waves were hushed—glad were they for the calm—and then He brought them to their longed-for haven."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"And warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again."

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My Prayer

Receive my thanks, loving Father, for the Word of salvation which first stirred up faith within me; receive my thanks, gracious God, for the many stories of healing

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which have nourished that faith; and receive my thanks, Divine Comforter, for the Healing Spirit now at work within me.

Thou, Lord, art the Energy of my life. Praise be to Thee!

Thou, Lord, art the End of my longing. Praise be to Thee!

Thou, Lord, art the Earnest of my liberty. Praise be to Thee!

Amen.

✠

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FOURTEENTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"THEY went into Capernaum and on the first Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. His way of teaching filled them with amazement, for He taught them like one with authority and not like the Doctors of the Law.

"That very day, in their synagogue, there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit, who cried out: 'What is your business with us, Jesus the Nazarene? Have you come to destroy us? We know who you are, the Holy One of God.' Jesus rounded on him. 'Hold your tongue,' He said, 'and come out of the man.' The unclean spirit convulsed the man, gave a loud cry, and came out of him.

"All were amazed. 'What have we here?' they said, as they talked the matter over. 'A new doctrine, this! And it has power behind it. He even tells unclean spirits what to do and they obey Him.'"

(St. Mark i.)

✠

My Thought For Today

I wonder if I have kept my sense of amazement at His way of teaching; or have I become so familiar with the facts of the Faith that the unique Figure of the Teacher Himself has become just a little hazy in my eyes? One thing is sure: by losing my amazement at the uniqueness of His teachings in the Scriptures, I shall automatically blind myself to the vision of Him as the Great Physician.

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These men who were present in the synagogue were not slow to see the connection between Christ's preaching and His healing power. It was not just a spoken word, but an acted word as well. Yet many people today are slow to see the connection between accepting the truths of the Gospel and accepting His gift of healing. They cannot quite realise just how saving a belief it is to believe that God loves them to the uttermost, or that He is willing to forgive the blackest sin. And yet the benefits of such beliefs for *physical* health are too well authenticated to be doubted any longer. Yet, maybe *I* still doubt?

Whatever else the story of the possessed man at Capernaum means, it certainly brings the stimulating reminder that *my* unclean spirit must give way to the Holy Power of Christ. This man, of course, was in a highly abnormal psychological state—yet isn't it true that the bad in *every* man is able to recognise perfect Goodness? And isn't it true that *every* man has some sin or other which he is reluctant for Christ to destroy?

Must I not hope that this reluctance is not preventing my physical healing—far less my spiritual healing? And can I not hope, on the other hand, that by my daily worship and reading of the Scriptures the Figure of Christ may at last present Itself to me in such Holiness and Power that *my* unclean spirit may be rebuked as finally and as wonderfully as that of the possessed man of Capernaum—Christ's first case of demoniac possession? Can I doubt, from this story, that that is what He longs to do for me—if I will give Him what co-operation I can?

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My Prayer For Today

O Thou Who alone canst create a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me, I come to Thee this day for cleansing and renewal. I have been possessed by the spirit of fear; and crave now the spirit of faith. I have been possessed by the spirit of heaviness; and I crave now the spirit of buoyancy. I have been possessed by the spirit of resentment; and crave now the spirit of love—for Jesus' sake.

There is nothing that I can give Thee, Father, in thankfulness for Thy care of me, except myself. Help me to give just that. May I see that Thou desirest no return for Thy love, except to watch me living a life of love. Grant me now and always to leave the issues of each day trustfully in Thy Hands, believing implicitly in Thy will to heal me.

O Lord of All Being, save me from being possessed by the spirit of pride and self-reliance.

O Creator of Beauty, save me from being possessed by the spirit of impurity and imperfection.

O Author of Blessing, save me from being possessed by the spirit of apathy and ingratitude.

For Jesus' sake.

Hear me, Father, as I commend to Thee those who suffer from malignant disease (*silent prayer*); those who suffer from split-personality or other mental affliction (*silent prayer*); those who suffer from what *they* regard as an incurable disease (*silent prayer*). May they be raised to a new vision and a new hope; and may they know the difference between resigning themselves to their sickness and resigning themselves to Thee.

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These prayers—and my unspoken prayers—I offer Thee, Saviour, for Thy Name's sake.

Amen.

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"THUS saith the Lord: Call thou unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. . . . Behold, I will bring health and cure, and will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"*Dear Lord and Father of mankind,*
Forgive our foolish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind;
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace."

✠

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My Prayer

Thou, dear Lord, hast promised that, "if I call on Thee, Thou wilt answer me"; thanks be Thine for the fulfilment of Thy promise!

Thou, dear Lord, hast promised to "show me great and mighty things which I knew not"; thanks be Thine for the fulfilment of Thy promise!

Thou, dear Lord, hast promised to "bring health and cure, and reveal unto me the abundance of peace and truth"; thanks be Thine for the fulfilment of Thy promise!

And if that fulfilment is still only partial, grant that my faith may be complete. For in quietness and confidence shall be my strength.

For the healing Love of the Cross, I praise Thee, O God.
For the healing Life of the Spirit, I praise Thee, O God.
For the healing Light of the Word, I praise Thee, O God.
Amen.

✠

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FIFTEENTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"ON another Sabbath day when He went to the synagogue and taught, there was a man there whose right hand was withered, and the Doctors and Pharisees watched Him closely to see whether He would heal on the Sabbath, hoping to have a charge to bring against Him. But He knew their thoughts and said to the man with the withered hand: 'Rise, and stand here in the centre.'

"The man rose and stood there, and Jesus said to them: 'I put a question to you. Are we permitted on the Sabbath to choose between doing good and doing evil, saving a life and destroying it?' Then, after looking at each of them in turn, He said to the man: 'Hold out your hand.' He did so, and his hand was made sound once more."

(St. Luke vi.)

✠

My Thought For Today

The question which most sufferers asked at the time of Christ's ministry on earth was whether it was right for them to be healed at all—far less on the Sabbath. How tragic that there should be any doubt about God's willingness to heal at any time! I know He wants to heal my affliction—but maybe I doubt His ability. If so, it's worth looking at this simple but vivid story of an instantaneous cure.

I see at once that the man himself played quite a large part in his cure. Jesus could easily have come over to him

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and performed the healing without asking him to rise to his feet. But He didn't. He asked him first of all to "rise, and stand here in the centre". Perhaps that is the request He makes to me? And perhaps I have wanted Him to come over and heal me as I sat at ease? Certainly I have tried to keep praying, but I cannot doubt that I have been greatly tempted to desire a healing at minimum inconvenience to myself.

I am impressed, moreover, by the obvious fact that it never occurred to Jesus that the man wouldn't respond properly to His suggestions. Yes, Jesus had faith in the man—just as the man had faith in Him. This is one of the most important factors in spiritual healing—and one that is often forgotten or minimised. Can I be totally unconcerned that Jesus has faith in me—now? Indeed I cannot. There may be doubt about my believing in Him, but He certainly believes in me.

But, granted my faith in Him, and granted that I have taken every possible practical step to assist my healing (even if it's only taking the trouble to send a fortnightly progress report to the healer who may be trying to help me)—can I expect that I shall be "made sound once more"? Why not? Maybe not immediately; maybe there's a whole work of repair to be done first; maybe a slow cure is God's way of ensuring my continual growth in grace. But His will is to heal; and His work is to heal—and I believe! So what does hinder me from being healed? Nothing!

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My Prayer For Today

O Thou Who dost give Thyself for me, help me daily to give myself to Thee.

O Thou Who dost believe in me, help me daily to believe in Thee as the all-sufficient Saviour.

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O Thou Who dost seek to possess me, help me daily to seek to be possessed.

Through Jesus Christ my Lord.

Gracious Father, Thou hast bid me pray in His Name; grant then that I may pray, having cast out all undue self-concern. Grant that I may never pray in the hope of simply making use of Thee, but that I may be made use of by Thee. And grant that I may think, say, and do only those things of which Thou couldst approve.

Thou, Heavenly King, art the Vanquisher of sin; do Thou conquer it in me.

Thou, Heavenly Sympathiser, art the Dispeller of sorrow; do Thou lift it away from me.

Thou, Heavenly Healer, art the Rescuer from sickness; do Thou perform this for me.

But, lest my prayer should not avail because of selfishness, hear me as I pray for those sharing the fellowship of suffering: and let this prayer arise not because I believe it will help me only, but because I feel the privilege of speaking with Thee, my Father, about those who do so deeply concern me. Bless each one, I pray. And bless those who tend them, for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

✠

EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"THESE waters . . . being brought forth into the sea . . . shall be healed. And it shall come to pass that everything that liveth . . . whithersoever the rivers shall come,

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shall live: for the waters shall be healed, and everything shall live whither the river cometh."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"Father, whose will is life and good
For all of mortal breath,
Bind strong the bond of brotherhood
Of those who fight with death.

Empower the hands and hearts and wills
Of friends in lands afar,
Who battle with the body's ills,
And wage Thy holy war.

Where'er they heal the maimed and blind,
Let love of Christ attend:
Proclaim the good Physician's mind,
And prove the Saviour friend."

✠

My Prayer

I thank Thee, Saviour of all my being, that the power of Thy Spirit is living and working in me; and I thank Thee for the deeper consciousness of Him which has come to me during these past few moments of worship. For the sense of peace and pardon, for the power of prayer, and for the

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promise of perfectness in Thy heavenly Kingdom, I give Thee thanks, O God.

Receive the praise of my mind this night as I thank Thee for the richer Truth I have learned.

Receive the praise of my heart this night as I thank Thee for the amazing Love I have had unfolded to me.

Receive the praise of my body this night as I thank Thee for the gracious freedom Thou hast granted me.

And the honour and glory be Thine, O my Saviour!

Amen.

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SIXTEENTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"ON the journey to Jerusalem He passed between Samaria and Galilee, and as He came to one of the villages, He was faced by ten lepers, who kept their distance and called across to Him: 'Jesus! Master! Have pity on us.' Directly He saw them He said: 'Go and show yourselves to the priests,' with the result that as they went they were cleansed.

"'And one of them, seeing that he was cured, turned back with a great cry of praise to God, prostrated Himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him. This man was a Samaritan. Jesus asked: 'Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Can it be true that none of them except this foreigner has come back to give glory to God?' And to the man He said: 'Rise and go. Your faith has saved you.'"

(St. Luke xvii.)

✠

My Thought For Today

I cannot read this story without linking it with the story of the *one* leper whom Jesus healed straightway; and the difference in the time factor is suggestive. For here the lepers are cleansed "as they went", i.e. by a different method than that employed in the case of the one leper—yet, by the same power. Here we have a firm refutation of the idea that the same healing technique can be applied to each and every illness, as some healers maintain. Christ

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may heal me in a different way and in a different time than my fellow-sufferer: which is worth remembering. Certainly I must know of more than one sufferer who was cleansed as he went, but found nothing happened until he had got home, when his ailment was either greatly relieved or gone altogether.

But is there also a mild rebuke for me in this story? For, have I not been tempted to think I should be cleansed *as I lay* and not *as I went*, and that Christ should heal without any help from me? Often He does—but am I right in *expecting* Him to do it in that way for me? Christ wants as much faith and love from me as He can possibly get, for even the power of God cannot work smoothly without the oil of man's faith.

Is it, indeed, possible for me to assume that I cannot be really whole—saved in body, mind, and soul—without the profound faith of this thankful Samaritan? I think so. Bodily healing *may* come without faith—but not the salvation of my soul. These nine healed men were healed only in one sense—the Samaritan in every sense.

The question which remains for me, then, is this: Is my aim the healing of my body, or the healing of my being?

✠

My Prayer For Today

Hear my prayer, Father, as I lay before Thee the faith which believes Thou dost exist, and grant me also that faith which believes Thou dost heal. I know, Father, that sickness does not come from Thee; but give me also to know that it actually arises through *absence* of Thee. I believe, Father, that Thou wilt heal me; yet, if healing does not come, let me still believe—in Thee, and in healing.

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For I do so want to believe, Lord Jesus, even where I cannot understand. Help me to this faith, I pray!

O Thou Dispeller of men's fears, graciously take away my fear of the unknown, that I may rest confidently in Thy loving Purpose for me.

O Thou Destroyer of men's fantasies, graciously rebuke me for my wrong ideas of Thee, that I may know Thee for what Thou art—the Just and Loving God.

O Thou Deliverer of men's frailties, graciously send the healing power of Thy Spirit into my whole being, that I may give Thee the greater glory.

For Jesus' sake.

For all the work of healing which constantly and lovingly is pursued in this world of Thine, I pray this day. May those who suffer or feel at the end of their strength know the power of the Lord. Bless those who, even this day, may turn to Thee as Saviour, and find peace of soul. (*Silent prayer.*)

Now grant, O Lord, that my thoughts may be pure, my words clean, and my deeds noble, so that even as I witness quietly for Thee here, Thy will may be done in me. Keep my heart ever open to the warmth of Thy Love; keep my mind ever open to the power of Thy Truth; and keep my will ever ready to be changed by Thine: through Jesus Christ my healing Saviour.

Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"THEN shall Thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry and He shall say: Here I am. And the Lord shall . . . satisfy thy soul in drought, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"O King of kings, before whose throne
The angels bow, no gift can we
Present that is indeed our own,
Since heaven and earth belong to Thee;
Yet this our souls through grace impart,
The offering of a thankful heart.

O Holy Spirit, Fount of breath,
Whose comforts never fail nor fade,
Vouchsafe the life that knows no death,
Vouchsafe the light that knows no shade;
And grant that we, through all our days,
May share Thy gifts and sing Thy praise."

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My Prayer

The Spirit of Life is surging through me, O God—for which I give Thee joyous thanks.

Thy Spirit of Light is shining upon me, O God—for which I give Thee ardent praise.

Thy Spirit of Love is sweeping into me, O God—for which I give Thee the gratitude of my heart.

Thou art healing the wounds of sin and sickness in me, Lord, and making me truly whole. Thou hast been good to me, even when I have refused to acknowledge Thy Goodness. Thou hast upheld me even when I *desired* to sink down and succumb to what I wrongly thought was the inevitable. For these and every token of Thy persistent care of me, I thank Thee, my Redeemer.

Amen.

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SEVENTEENTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"A CENTURION there had a slave who was sick—indeed, he was at death's door. His master set great store by him and so, having heard about Jesus, he sent Him a deputation of Jewish Elders begging Him to come and save his servant. These presented themselves to Jesus and earnestly besought Him. They said: 'The man is one who has deserved this kindness at your hands, for he loves our people and he built us our synagogue himself.

"Jesus went with them and had nearly reached the house when the centurion sent Him a message by some friends. 'Lord,' he said, 'do not put yourself out. I am not worthy to receive you under my roof. Nor, for that reason, did I presume to come to you myself. But you have only to say the word and my boy will be cured.'

"When He heard this Jesus was amazed at the man; and turning to the crowd that followed Him, He said: 'I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.' And the messengers, when they got back to the house, found the slave in perfect health."

(St. Luke vii.)

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My Thought For Today

Here, surely, is a vivid illustration of a wonderful fact which has become increasingly realised as healers report their patients' testimonies—the fact of what is commonly

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called "absent healing". To God, distance is no object.

Science as a whole is supposed to laugh at the very possibility—yet I can think of several parallels which can be drawn, which seem to give considerable support to the Christian's belief. The wireless wave sent out from London is received and heard at the same time in London itself and in Glasgow. Is it a great impediment for faith that the prayers of a Healing Group should be able to be carried as quickly from central London to Glasgow as from central London to the suburbs?

Actually, to disbelieve distant or absent healing is the proof of a faulty conception of God. Was I not told in childhood that God is everywhere? And so He is. God's healing waves do not have to come from a local transmitter set up in a particular place in heaven! ! They are there all the time. God is *always* near me. It's my responsibility to remove the barriers which are keeping Him, and His curative rays, from penetrating into my body—and my soul.

To come back to the gospel story: there is one lovely touch worth noticing. Even the Jews pleaded for the Gentile. And can I doubt that these solicitings were far from superfluous? Can I doubt, indeed, that the love of the centurion for his slave was more than an unimportant factor in Christ's willingness to come to heal him? In God's providence, man's love for his fellow has a curative property. It is no exaggeration to say that "understanding love is itself a healing grace."

Are there not those who love me, and are praying now for me with all the fervour of that love? In face of that fact, must my own faith and my own prayers be stirred up to greater warmth and effectiveness? Yes, my lukewarmness, my reluctance to believe in the power of prayer, may be nullifying their work on my behalf—and probably causing them a grief which my richer faith and more anxious co-operation would have banished.

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The question which remains for me is this: "Do I firmly believe that Jesus has only to say the word, and *I* shall be healed?" For He *can*—and *will*!!

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My Prayer For Today

O Thou Who art the Source of healing power, I gladly turn to Thee for strength of heart.

O Thou Who art the Source of liberating joy, I gladly turn to Thee for buoyancy of spirit.

O Thou Who art the Source of deep composure, I gladly turn to Thee for serenity of mind.

Grant, O Father, that I might be surrounded by the love not just of heaven, but also of earth; that I might know it to be not only Thy will for me to be healed, but also the will of my friends. May I be as confident of Thy Love as Thou art of my cure. May I seek Thy help as earnestly as Thou dost desire to give it. May I give myself to Thee as unreservedly as Thou dost give Thyself to me.

And since all sufferers are bound together in a sacred fellowship, I would pray for my fellow-sufferers this day, asking that the same power which is mightily at work in me this minute might be manifest in them to dispel the shadows of life. (*Silent prayer.*) I pray for Thy blessing upon the gracious work of healing in all places—and to Thy Name may all the glory be given, now and always.

Amen.

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"ELISHA went forth unto the spring of waters and cast the salt in there, and said: Thus saith the Lord: I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"Within these walls let holy peace
And love and concord dwell;
Here give the troubled conscience ease,
The wounded spirit heal.

May we in faith receive Thy word,
In faith present our prayers,
And in the presence of our Lord
Unbosom all our cares."

✠

My Prayer

I thank Thee, Father, that the prayer of faith can raise the sick; and I thank Thee especially for those prayers being offered for me now, and which have already brought me betterment—perhaps without my knowing it.

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I thank Thee, Father, for easing my troubled conscience and healing my wounded spirit; and I rejoice that Thy power is unlimited—and even now breaking down my unconscious opposition and my lingering fears.

For the Life which is stirring within me;
For the Love which is smiling upon me;
For the Light which is shining upon me;
Praise be to Thee, O God!

Amen.

✠

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EIGHTEENTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"As He left the town (Jericho) with His disciples and a large following, there was a blind beggar, Bartimaeus, sitting by the road. Learning that this was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out: 'Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me!' A number of people told him to hold his tongue, but this only made him cry out all the more: 'Son of David, have pity on me!'

"Jesus stopped and said: 'Call him.' So they called the blind man: 'All is well,' they said to him. 'Get up: He is calling you.' Bartimaeus threw off his cloak, leapt to his feet and came to Jesus.

"Jesus said to him: 'What do you wish Me to do for you?' 'To make me see again, Rabbouni,' said the blind man. 'Go now,' said Jesus. 'Your faith has saved you.' His sight came back at once and he followed Him along the road."

(St. Mark x.)

✠

My Thought For Today

How wonderful it is to be able to see and understand the printed page. Perhaps it's only a story like this which reminds me, and many like me, how often my prayers of asking crowd out the prayer of thanks which should accompany it. For, just as there is good even in the most

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wicked man, so there is health as well as disease in my own body.

Could it be that I am preoccupied with my particular trouble to the extent of being blind to the different troubles of others? Could it be that I've been spending all my time learning to pray for self, when half my time spent in praying for others *might* have produced double the results? Could it be that a genuine prayer of thanksgiving for the gift of sight—or any other faculty which I have *not* lost—would do me more good than all my exaggerated self-concern? This is indeed worth a thought.

But, whatever my trouble is, this story brings me more than a grain of comfort: for Christ is neither blind to my need, nor deaf to my call. As He had pity on this blind man, so will He have pity on me. The power that restored sight is the same power which can drive out the pains of my flesh.

Did I hear someone say this was just a cure by suggestion? That the huge crowd round the blind man would make him excited, and so more susceptible to the Healer's touch? I think the presence of a crowd, most of whom had rebuked him for crying out, would just as easily prevent the right atmosphere being created, as help it. Christ no more *needs* the right conditions for healing than He *needs* men's prayers for someone—though, of His goodness, He usually desires them, and uses them. But His is the power! And the glory!

Do I really want that power to work in *me*, and that glory to be seen in *me*? Then should I not be uplifted by the reward of perseverance given to blind Bartimaeus? "Son of David, have pity on me!" And He had! Should I not rejoice that, in God's Providence, my faith can and does save me? This story is the last healing miracle recorded in St. Mark's gospel. But miracles are not confined to New Testament times. They happen now. They even happen

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Power which is soothing my flesh. Thanks be to Thee, Author of Life and Hope, for lifting me up to a richer life and a new hope. Thanks be to Thee, Father of all, for showing me that Thou carest for me.

And receive my praise for the Grace, Mercy, and Peace made known in Jesus—and now through Him made effective in me.

Amen.

✠

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NINETEENTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"ON a Sabbath day, when He had gone into the house of one of the leading Pharisees for a meal and they were watching Him closely, a man who suffered from dropsy appeared before Him. Whereupon Jesus said to the Lawyers and Pharisees: 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?' They were silent; and He laid hold of him, cured him and dismissed him.

"Then He said to them: 'Which of *you* on the Sabbath, when his donkey or ox falls into a well, will not immediately pull him out?' To which they were unable to reply."

(St. Luke xiv.)

✠

My Thought For Today

How strange it seems to anyone living nowadays that there could be any question of God not condoning the healing of a sick man, on the grounds that it was the Sabbath! This, surely, is religion run riot.

Yet many people make another mistake which is hardly less excusable: namely, believing that there are some diseases which God does not will to cure on *any* day. The Jews did at least believe that it was right to heal on week-days—whereas some people actually believe God has sent them a particular illness or infirmity (perhaps as a punishment, or for some unknown reason) which He has no

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intention they should be rid of. This, too, is religion run riot!

No doubt this idea is an inheritance from the same Jews —yet it is one which Jesus clearly refuted. Sickness is to be fought as something evil. No doubt I, like others, could bear my particular ailment indefinitely, and even feel a little proud at my courage! Yet what a solemn thought it is that maybe my healing has not come largely because I have got it into my head that God does not will to heal me. But He does! The blockage is not at God's end but mine.

The man in the story had dropsy, an unpleasant collection of watery fluid in the tissues or cavities of the body—not normally the work of a moment's healing. Yet, with convincing simplicity, St. Luke writes: "He laid hold of him, cured him and dismissed him." Yes, as easily as that! Could it be that *my* complaint might be susceptible of an equally swift cure? Why not? "With God all things are possible."

Maybe it was just a functional complaint that this man had. But was it any less the power of Christ which healed him? Must I not, in any event, believe that if I allow Christ to "lay hold of *me*", He will "cure me and dismiss me"? Must I not believe the Promise contained in the evangelist's words: "Jesus went round the whole of Galilee . . . curing *every* sort of illness and infirmity among the people"? Must I not believe in His Power to heal *me—today*?

In face of the overwhelming evidence of New Testament cures, and of those achieved in modern times, how can I hold back? For "Jesus saves"! Not just soul, but body too. "Jesus saves." Not just from sin, but from suffering too. "Jesus saves." Not just from an unhealthy conscience, but from an unhealthy mind as well. "Even so I come, Lord Jesus."

✠

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My Prayer For Today

There are many things, Father, that I have to confess this day: my tendency to forget Thy Love for me, my hesitancy to believe in Thy Will for me to be healed, my aptitude for over-anxiety, or for a too-ready submission to what I mistakenly call my fate. I confess my reluctance to accept the forgiveness I badly need, my refusal to believe in the power of my friends' prayers on my behalf, my inability to turn away from self: and I am so sorry for these, and my many other faults, O Gracious Saviour.

But now, having accepted Thy pardon, may I find Thy peace; having felt Thy love, may I see Thy light; having acknowledged Thy favour to me, may I know Thy faithfulness to do that which Thou hast promised. Help me now to pray for those known to me who are in pain or distress this day; and minister to their several needs. (*Silent prayer.*) And help me, Lord, also to remember that there are some who are praying for me—and that Thou hearest their prayers.

Preserve me, O God, from the sin of wanting healing more than Thee; from the folly of thinking my daily worship is a short cut to health; from the presumption of testing Thee by the measure of success or failure which attends my devotions. For I praise Thee, Lord Jesus, for what Thou art, before I praise Thee for what Thou dost. Accept my praise now, I pray, and, of Thy mercy, use it as a channel of renewal and redemption. And in the coming days, help me to co-operate in the fullest confidence with those who seek my health through physical channels, knowing that all true healing is of Thee. Through Jesus Christ, my Lord, and the Physician of my body.

Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"JESUS went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good tidings of the Kingdom, and curing every sort of illness and infirmity among the people."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"*Be Thou our great Deliverer still,*
Thou Lord of life and death;
Restore and quicken, soothe and bless,
With Thine almighty breath;
To hands that work and eyes that see
Give wisdom's heavenly lore,
That whole and sick, and weak and strong,
May praise Thee evermore."

✠

My Prayer

Lord, Thou hast not ceased to desire my healing.
Lord, Thou hast not ceased to work within me.
Lord, Thou hast not ceased to believe in me—
For which I give Thee heartfelt thanks this night.

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Praise be to Thee, O Saviour, that in this day and generation Thou art still "curing every sort of illness and infirmity among the people"—and I give Thee thanks not only for the tokens of Thy healing mercy in the past days, but for the irrevocable confidence Thou hast given me that strength will come out of weakness, and light out of darkness.

Fill me now and always with the spirit of thanksgiving—for without Thee I should not even be alive.

Fill me now and always with the spirit of joy—for without Thee all is gloom and despair.

Fill me now and always with the spirit of hope—for Thou hast promised, and shown me, that the Resurrection always follows the Cross.

In His Name I ask it.

Amen.

✠

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TWENTIETH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"He went to His own part of the country, accompanied by His disciples. When the Sabbath came round He began to teach in the synagogue, and most of them when they heard Him were confounded. They said: 'Where did the man get this from? What is this wisdom that has been given Him, and these miracles that are brought about through Him?' . . .

"But Jesus said to them: 'A prophet is not without honour except in his own country, his own family and his own house.' And He was unable to do there any miracle of note, though He did lay His hands on a few sick people and cure them. He was amazed at their lack of faith. . .

"Then He summoned the Twelve to Him and began to send them out in pairs on missions, giving them authority over unclean spirits. . . . So they set forth and preached, to bring men to repentance, and from time to time cast many demons out and anointed many sick with oil and cured them."

(St. Mark vi.)

✠

My Thought For Today

It is one of the sadder features of life that familiarity so often breeds incredulity—if not contempt. Maybe I have become so familiar with Christ that, in spite of myself, I

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have become inoculated against the infection of faith. I know Him as Friend—and in so doing maybe I have blinded myself to His Kingship; I know Him as Saviour of my soul—and in so doing I have pushed into the background the fact that He is also the Healer of my body.

These men who tried to soft-pedal Christ's achievements were clearly guilty of deliberate blindness. They *ought* not to have marvelled so much, for they knew the reports of His previous mighty works that had been coming in. They *ought* not to have tried to throw cold water on His achievements, for His upbringing simply had nothing to do with the point at issue, namely, was He, or was He not, capable of doing the things that were reported of Him?

Yet, haven't I some preconceived notions about what He can and cannot do? Perhaps I believe He can heal functional disorders, but not organic? Perhaps I believe He can heal through the laying on of hands, but not through prayer alone? Perhaps I am "taking with a pinch of salt" the oft-quoted saying: "With God *all* things are possible"?

Could it be that Christ is unable to do a miracle of note in me simply because of my half-hearted faith? Perhaps I should realise that Christ could have done miracles in His own country, even without men's faith for He is not bound to wait until men have faith in Him. But these men were obviously confirmed belittlers of their famed countryman, and Jesus must have seen that no good purpose would have been served by doing a miracle of note.

The question for me seems to be: Is He amazed at my lack of faith? If so, maybe it's because I recognise Him, deep down, as only a prophet and not the Saviour. Yet that is what He is: the Saviour of men's souls and the Saviour of their bodies. Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.

✠

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My Prayer For Today

Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Who didst send out Thy disciples to bring men to repentance, hear my confession and restore to me the joy of Thy salvation. If I have developed a partial immunity to the great Love which Thou hast towards me, bring upon me the infection of a fervent spirit, that I may know Thee as Saviour and serve Thee as Lord. If I have been deceiving myself with the belief that I needed no forgiveness, but only healing, reveal to me my deepest need, and help me to see Thou dost meet it.

Hear me, Lord, as I pray for those whom Thou hast sent out, even in this generation, with authority over unclean spirits—that their word may have healing in its wings: for it is Thy Word; that their call to repentance may come with power: for Thy forgiveness awaits them; that their ministrations may bring health and happiness: for this is Thy purpose of Love for all men. Be with all doctors and nurses and psychiatrists, and with those who heal through their love and their prayers. Give skill to their hands, wisdom to their minds, gentleness to their hearts—and give them a sense of privilege in being co-workers with Thy Son, even Jesus my Lord.

And hear me, Father, as I pray in the silence of my heart for those known to me—and those unknown—who lie in pain or grief. (*Silent prayer.*) Bless them—and bless me, O Saviour Christ.

Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"SOME, weakened by their sinful ways, were sick and suffering through evil-doing; . . . they were on the verge of death; they cried to the Eternal in their need, to save them from their evil plight; He sent His Word to heal them and preserve their life."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"*Plenteous grace with Thee is found,*
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound;
Make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of Thee;
Spring Thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity."

✠

My Prayer

Thanks be to Thee, O God of grace, that Thou hast forgiven me my trespasses.

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Thanks be to Thee, O God of light, that Thou hast dispelled my darkness.

Thanks be to Thee, O God of power, that Thou hast changed my weakness into strength.

Not just for Thy clear promise of healing do I praise Thee, Lord; but also for the fulfilment of that promise which I know and feel has begun in me. And I acknowledge with heartfelt thanks Thy goodness in lifting me up from a disease-consciousness to a health-consciousness, in replacing the dark colours of my vision with the brighter hues of that picture which Thou Thyself hast clearly before Thine eyes.

For all these things, and for the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, thanks be to Thee, Fountain of Life!

Amen.

✠

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The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"On leaving the synagogue, He went into Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from high fever and they consulted Him about her. Jesus, standing over her, rebuked the fever and it left her. She got up immediately and began to wait on them.

"As the sun set, all those with friends who were suffering from this or that disease brought them to Him; and He cured them, laying His hands on every one."

(St. Luke iv.)

✠

My Thought For Today

It is strange how many people, in serious distress either for others or for themselves, consult everyone except the Lord of Life Himself. So often He is a last resort, or left out altogether. Sometimes, no doubt, people do not consult Christ because they don't want to bother Him—which, on the face of it, seems quite a worthy motive. Yet it betrays the very thing that is lacking—a belief in a personal Christ, a belief in a Christ Who cares to the extent of *not* being bothered by any request born of need.

How natural, and how right, that "they consulted Him about her". How natural, and how right, that "He rebuked the fever and it left her". How was it done? I do not know. What exactly was the fever? I do not know. But I very definitely know that, whereas no one

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else was able to help Simon's mother-in-law, Christ was. To say, as has been said, that fevers can be checked by hypnotic suggestion, neither proves that that was how Christ cured, nor does it explain away the cure. It was clearly a miracle: something wonderful. It was clearly a demonstration of divine power.

It is the same Saviour that I am called upon to love and believe in now—the Saviour who "heals all my diseases, who redeems my life from destruction". Perhaps He will do it by a word—if He deems it appropriate. Perhaps He will cure me through a devout healer, by laying on of hands. Or He may heal me through the fervent prayers of those who love me. Whichever way He chooses, one thing He desires in me: the fervency of faith which is prepared to believe in Him whether or not He heals. Have I got it?

✠

My Prayer For Today

O Thou Comforter of men, my Father, I come into Thy presence with a heart made joyful by the remembrance of Thy great Goodness to me. Even in the midst of discomfort and pain, I have found Thy peace; even amid perplexity and anguish of soul, I have felt Thy healing touch.

Yet I have not always lived on the summit of faith. There are times when I have doubted, and I have heard Thy whispered rebuke; there are times when I have been afraid, and Thou hast reminded me of the perfect love which casts out fear; there are times when I have been loveless and full of self-concern, and I could have wept for shame. Do Thou, of Thy mercy, not only forgive me, gracious Lord, but renew a right spirit within me—for Jesus Christ's sake.

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O Thou Who art King of Glory, manifest Thy power in me!
O Thou Who art Creator of Goodness, fill me with all good!
O Thou Who art Bringer of Gladness, make me to rejoice in Thee!

Hear me, Father, as I pray for others too. For I am bound together with all sufferers in the holy fellowship of suffering, and know that it is Thy will for our prayers to help one another. Support those who are unable to walk; rebuke the fevers and diseases which lay us so low; give peace to those who suffer from nervous and mental troubles. And bless those whom I would remember in the silence of my heart now. (*Silent prayer.*)

Amen.

✠

EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"BLESS the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"*Thou to whom the sick and dying*
Ever came, nor came in vain,

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Still with healing words replying
To the wearied cry of pain,
Hear us, Jesus, as we meet,
Suppliants at Thy mercy-seat.

So may sickness, sin, and sadness
To Thy healing virtue yield,
Till the sick and sad, in gladness,
Rescued, ransomed, cleansèd, healed,
One in Thee together meet,
Pardoned at Thy judgment-seat."

✠

My Prayer

I can thank Thee, Father, for nothing greater than Thyself. Thou art my God, and I praise Thee for the glory which is Thine. But I thank Thee too for what Thou hast done for me—sustained even to this evening hour, blessed me with patience and comfort and hope, sent Thy healing Spirit into my distressed frame. For every token of love shown me by my friends, for the knowledge that others are praying for me and are confident of my recovery, and for the great healings Thou hast wrought in many of my fellow-sufferers, I give Thee thanks, O God.

In that Thou art the Forgiver of all mine iniquities, the Healer of all my diseases, and the Redeemer of my life, I give Thee the praise of my heart this night, O Thou Who lovest me.

Amen.

✠

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TWENTY-FIRST HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"LEAVING the district of Tyre He returned by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee across the territory of the Ten Towns. They brought Him a deaf man who could hardly speak, and besought Him to lay His hand on him. He took the man away from the crowd by himself, thrust His fingers into his ears, spat, and touched his tongue. Then, looking up into the heavens, He gave a sigh and said to the man *Ephphatha*, which means 'Be opened'.

"The man's ears were opened, the impediment to his speech was removed, and he spoke clearly. Jesus commanded them to tell no one, but the more He did so, the more eagerly they published the news. In fact, they were astonished beyond measure. They said: 'How perfectly He has done everything! He not only makes deaf people hear but He makes dumb people talk.'"

(St. Mark vii.)

✠

My Thought For Today

Here is a story rich with suggestion. For many people today, deafness and dumbness (partial or complete) are among the ailments considered to come into the category of incurable. It seems clear that Christ's contemporaries thought so. Yet today there are innumerable instances of the healing of deaf and dumb by non-physical means. The case of the man, stone-deaf for ten years, who came to

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a healing service conducted by Mrs. Salmon, and could hear perfectly after the laying on of hands, is by no means exceptional.

Yet this story is not recorded only for the benefit of the deaf and dumb. It was written down by St. Mark in order to "carry the mind along to that even larger ministry of making the mind and heart more sensitive to the voices of God and of the world". This is a ministry we all need—whatever our special ailment. Indeed, is it even possible that my physical ailment has been caused—or at least aggravated—by my spiritual deafness to the still small voice of God?

Whether or not this is so, should I not remember the promise that both the physical ears and the spiritual ears of the deaf "shall be unstopped"? Jesus was careful to take His patient out of the reach of those who might deride the very idea of a cure; and perhaps, in my case, He so desperately would like to take me aside and, even in the quietness of my room now, work His miracle of love. His Love *is* something to shout about—yet maybe I have chosen to remain one of "God's mutes": and that, in itself, does not help my particular complaint. To listen to His Word, as I worship; and then to speak His Word, in witness—that is one road, at least, to healing.

I see that Christ did not heal with a word. I see that He did not scorn to use what psychologists would call suggestion. Maybe that is His way with me. Maybe He knows that, to heal me gradually, will be most beneficial for my total spiritual experience. Maybe He even knows that, by responding to His suggestion, I can play a big part in the cure He has ready for me. Yes, even to me, He is saying this moment: "Be opened"—not just my ears and mouth, but my heart and mind. And I *believe* in His Word of Power!

✠

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My Prayer For Today

Hear me, merciful Saviour, as I confess my deafness to Thy Promise of deliverance; as I confess how often I have stood dumb in face of some token of Thy saving Goodness. Forgive me if I have got used to the idea of being unwell; forgive me if I have thought to *deserve* a speedy cure; forgive me if I have failed to respond to the treatment in which Thou wouldst have me share. Help me now to give myself more wholeheartedly to Thy wisdom, in the knowledge that Thou doest everything perfectly.

My prayers for fellow-sufferers are so often weak and unreal, O God! Do Thou fill them now with passion and concern, that in the outgoing of my spirit healing may come not just to others, but to myself. (*Silent prayer.*)

Thou fillest all things, Creator Spirit; fill Thou me with Life.

Thou carest for all things, Father God; fill Thou me with Love.

Thou illuminest all things, Sun of my soul; fill Thou me with Light.

Wilt Thou grant me this day and every day to seek Thy Kingdom above all things—and I shall find that wholeness will be added unto me. Help me to understand more fully Thy purpose of love for all men, and grant that where I am tempted to doubt Thou wilt confirm my faith, that where I am tempted to despair Thou wilt raise my hopes, that where I am tempted to complain unto Thee Thou wilt give me the grace of patience and courage. And now unto Thee, the power of my life, be all honour and glory, now and always.

Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"AND Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"To Thee they went—the blind, the dumb,
The palsied, and the lame,
The leper with his tainted life,
The sick with fevered frame.

And, lo! Thy touch brought life and health,
Gave speech, and strength, and sight;
And youth renewed and frenzy calmed
Owned Thee, the Lord of light."

✠

My Prayer

For the comfort of my prayers, for those who have visited me, and especially for Thy Son, O God, I give Thee thanks this night. For keeping alight my lamp of hope and keeping steady my ship of faith, I thank Thee, Father. For the

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quietness of my home, for the simple joys that have come my way these past days, and for the grace that has transformed my suffering, I praise Thy holy Name.

Thanks be to Thee, O God, for the peace which passes my understanding but is real to my heart.

Thanks be to Thee, O Christ, for the pardon I hardly deserve but have certainly received.

Thanks be to Thee, O Holy Spirit, for the power my mind can hardly conceive but is mightily at work within me.

Amen.

✠

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TWENTY-THIRD HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"WHEN they came down from the mountains, He was met by a large crowd; and out of the gathering came a man's voice. 'Master,' he cried, 'I beg you to look at my son, who is the only one I have. A spirit seizes him and gives a sudden cry; it rends him till he foams at the mouth; and as the convulsions slowly subside, it leaves him shattered. I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.'

"At this, Jesus exclaimed: 'O faithless and perverse generation! How much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.' The lad was still on his way to Jesus when the demon flung him down and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and cured the lad; then gave him back to his father. And all were filled with awe at the majesty of God."

(St. Luke ix.)

✠

My Thought For Today

How natural that a father should forget the hundreds around him and beg for his epileptic son! No self-consciousness, no hesitancy, no feeling of doing something wrong in stealing the limelight, as it were. His, surely, is the cry of countless fathers in this present generation:

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"Master, I beg you to look at my son, who is the only one I have."

This is a picture which brings me a reminder: a reminder that I must never delay to beg for help for myself, or a loved one, on the grounds that Jesus has plenty on His mind without *my* trouble. Christ is the God of the individual. Yet, there are those who think they *ought* not to trouble Him. Must I not be quite sure that it is not only God's command that I bring my deepest needs before Him, but also His promise that they will be met? The fact of my not troubling Him with my infirmity, far from being a sign of deeper piety is actually a proof that I do not know God as Father, and this is how He wants to be known above all else.

Wasn't it because this anxious father stood in the right relationship with Him, that He was willing to perform this admittedly marvellous cure? The father's faith created the right atmosphere, as it were. It was because the disciples did *not* have this faith to create such an atmosphere that they received this rather severe rebuke. Which leads me to a very sober thought indeed: that maybe my faith is insufficient to create this atmosphere, not just for my own healing, but for the healing of someone else whom I love.

Whether this was a case of epilepsy as we know it, or not, the story makes it very plain that it took nothing less than the power of the healing Christ to cure it. The bystanders were rightly "filled with awe at the *majesty of God*". Should *I* not be similarly "filled with awe" at the mere reading of this wonderful story? For it's not just a story; it's intended to be a pointer to *my* cure, and to evoke *my* faith *in* that cure. Has it done so?

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My Prayer For Today

Thou desirest me, O God, to bring a mature faith to Thee; yet preserve me from the error of holding back just because I haven't got it. Thou desirest me to wish and pray for wholeness of soul as well as of body; yet preserve me from an exaggerated sense of shame when I can only summon the strength to ask for the latter. Thou desirest me to love Thee for Thyself more than for what Thou canst give me; yet preserve me from failure to praise Thee for Thy benefits just because I cannot yet praise Thee for Thyself.

Grant, O Lord, that even as I worship Thee in these daily devotions I may find my faith deepened, my love broadened, and my life enriched. Grant that I may not only believe in the healing power at work within me, but may be fully conscious of Him—and may give Him a freer course in my pained body and my restless soul. Lord Jesus, make me alive with joy! Give me hope for hopelessness! Give me love for lovelessness! Give me life for lifelessness! For Thine own name's sake.

For the healing ministry of Thy Church, I pray this day; that she may not be distracted or disheartened either by her own failures or by her many critics. For doctors and nurses, psychiatrists and psychologists, and for all workers among the sick, I pray; that a sense of vocation may be upon them, and the power of Thy Spirit be with them.

Bless those who are sick and cannot offer Thee the faith which I can—and help me to realise my responsibility for them by offering that faith on their behalf. Bless those who shall suffer great agony this night, and grant them the grace of courage, and of undying hope. For Jesus' sake.

Amen.

✠

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EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"His fame spread through the whole of Syria. They brought Him all that were sick and suffering from this or that disorder or affliction, the demoniacs, the lunatics, the paralytics—and He cured them."

✠

Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"*All creatures of our God and King,*
Lift up your voice and with us sing
Alleluia, Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam,
O praise Him, O praise Him,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

And all ye men of tender heart,
Forgiving others, take your part,
O sing ye, Alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God and on Him cast your care."

✠

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My Prayer

For the faith which has been kindled within my heart, and for the peace which has flooded my whole being, I give Thee thanks this night, O Saviour Christ. For the knowledge of Thy promise to heal, for the knowledge that many have been healed in all ages, and for the knowledge of the healing power which is even now working in me, I praise Thy Name.

To Thee, O Christ, I bring the adoring gratitude of my heart, for

Thou art the gracious Pardoner of my failings;

Thou art the divine Rebuker of my frailties;

Thou art the great Author of my faith;

Thou art the mighty Worker of my freedom; and the shining Lamp unto my feet.

Praise be to Thee, the Healer of every ill!

Amen.

✠

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TWENTY-FOURTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"As they left Jericho a large crowd followed Him. And there were two blind men sitting by the road, who when they heard that Jesus was passing cried out: 'Lord, have pity on us, Son of David!' People told them to hold their tongues, but this only made them cry out all the louder: 'Lord, have pity on us, Son of David!'

"Jesus stopped, called them to Him and said: 'What do you wish Me to do for you?' 'Lord,' they said, 'we want our eyes to be opened.' Jesus was moved to compassion and touched their eyes. Their sight came back at once and they followed Him."

(St. Matthew xx.)

✠

My Thought For Today

How typical of Jesus—and how symbolic—that He should turn aside from the large crowd which followed Him to these two needy souls. His whole ministry is full of this wonderful concern and compassion for individuals. And so today. I myself may be tempted to think that Christ is more interested in world missions, or ecumenical conferences, or packed congregations, than in my personal distress, but I would be wrong.

Christ's question to the two men is His question to me: "What do you wish Me to do for you?" That was His

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question to blind Bartimaeus—a story so like Matthew's that it may well be the same incident. And maybe I should realise that it's not such a superfluous question as it may sound. For, *why* do I want my eyes to be opened? Why do I want to be rid of my arthritis or my paralysis or my nervous debility? So that I may again be free to go my own way, or free to give God the greater glory?

Significantly enough, the two blind men followed Him, after the miracle was performed; which might suggest that their request for sight was not a mere request for personal convenience. Do I myself not feel that a cry for help which is coupled with a cry to "help mine unbelief" has more chance of availing with God than one prompted by the mere desire for the removal of physical pain?

In fact, maybe I am not physically blind, but could be suffering from a far more tragic form of blindness—*spiritual* blindness. If so, this story can help me to make the right approach. "Lord, have pity on me, Son of David!" And if I do that, I may not only find this ailment cured at once, but I may also find that half the battle is won for the healing of my physical complaint. One thing is sure: that if I follow Him *before* I am healed, there is more chance that I will follow Him *after* I am healed. "Lord, may it be so!"

✠

My Prayer For Today

O Thou Who art sent to heal the broken-hearted, bind up the sorrows of my heart this day!

O Thou Who art sent to preach deliverance to the captives, set me free from the tyranny of fear and despair!

O Thou Who art sent to restore sight to the blind, lighten

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the darkness of my ignorance and unbelief! For Christ's sake.

For those who are seriously ill and going through the valley of the shadow of death, I pray this day; for those whose hearts threaten to break with grief; for those who are held captive by infirmity of limb or nerve; for those who are losing all hope of recovery. Give me to know that my prayer on their behalf is not made in vain; and give them to know that they can help themselves through their own prayers. (Silent prayer.)

Thou, O Christ, hast worked within me too plainly for me not to acknowledge Thy wonderful Goodness and Thy healing power; Thou hast forgiven me my smallest sin so that I have the peace and joy of a good conscience; Thou hast blessed me with hope when I threatened to despair: with courage when I tended to submit: with faith when I was getting afraid—so that I rejoice now in Thy Fatherly care of me. Grant, O Christ, that every sufferer may share something of this joy: for Thy name's sake.

Amen.

✠

EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"THE Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

✠

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Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"Lord Jesus, think on me,
With care and woe opprest;
Let me Thy loving servant be,
And taste Thy promised rest.

Lord Jesus, think on me,
Amid the battle's strife;
In all my pain and misery
Be Thou my health and life."

✠

My Prayer

Lord of my life, I thank Thee this night for the renewal of my belief in Thy divine Wisdom and Goodness which has come even as I have worshipped Thee now. I thank Thee, Lord, for the Light which has illumined my way; for the Love which has filled my heart; and for the Life which has transformed my being. In that I am Thine, and Thou art mine, I praise Thee, O my Saviour!

For delivering me from the fears that threaten to cripple, from the self-concern which frustrates Thy purpose in me, and from the doubts which keep so many from being healed, I give Thee thanks, Thou Physician of my body and soul. And I praise Thee for the promise of grace,

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mercy, and peace, which has become Thy benediction upon me even now.

Amen.

✠

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TWENTY-FIFTH HEALING SERVICE

The Lord's Prayer

✠

The Lord's Power

"THE next day He arose while it was still dark, and leaving the house, made His way into the open country and prayed there for a while. Simon and his companions went in pursuit, found Him, and told Him that everyone was looking for Him. He said to them: 'Let us go elsewhere—to the neighbouring country towns—so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came to do.'

"And He went through the whole of Galilee, entering their synagogues to proclaim His message, and casting out demons."

(St. Mark i.)

✠

My Thought For Today

There is a deep significance in this fact that Jesus so often during His Ministry turned aside for periods of prayer. Here is the first occasion when He does so. He has just spent His energies in healing the crowds of sick; and now this expenditure of power is followed quite naturally by the renewal of power.

If the healer Himself found this necessary, how much more should the patient—myself! For I too have spent my energies time and time again—spent them in rather a different way—in enduring my particular cross, in facing up to pain and distress, in trying to sustain the will to

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live. And, unless I *do* renew my energy in prayer, there seems little alternative to cracking up completely. Prayer is not an extra; it is the very power of my life.

There is something else which I find suggestive in this passage: Jesus refused to be localised. He refused to become a popular Healer, however much good He might have done in that capacity. That surely is the correct way to understand His answer to Peter's news that "everyone was looking for Him". It is intolerable to think that when He said: "Let us go elsewhere . . ." He was simply trying to escape from the crowds of sick people who were looking for Him! No, He wanted to extend His preaching and healing ministry as far as He could, to bring the Promise of Wholeness to all men. Just how impressed have *I* been, for example, by the Healing Missions He conducted in Biblical times? Have they inspired *me* with the belief that He is able to cure me?

Yes, there are some who think of Him merely as a Preacher—yet the record is clear: He "entered their synagogues to proclaim His message", *and* "cast out demons". One thing is sure: however virulent or otherwise the demon is in *my* body, Christ has the desire, and the power, to cast it out. Must I not pray, and believe, that He *will* do this—even for me?

✠

My Prayer For Today

O Thou Who, alone among men, hast mastered the art and secret of Prayer, teach me how to pray! So often I have prayed with the mind but not the heart; so often I have prayed and found prayer unreal; so often I have prayed and been rebuked by the selfishness and self-concern of my prayer.

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Take my heart, O Lord, and let it be consecrated to Thee.
Take my faith, O Lord, and let it be content in Thee.
Take my frame, O Lord, and let it be cured by Thee.
For Thy Name's sake.

In all my prayers to Thee, O God, help me to ask only for those things which would not shame Thy purpose, or insult the spiritual image of Thyself which is within me. When I pray for health, may I desire it so that I may enjoy the greater freedom to praise Thee; when I pray for happiness, may I desire it so that I may share it with others; when I pray for heaven, may I desire it only as the natural fulfilment of that taste of heaven which Thou hast granted me here on earth.

There are many, Father, who need Thee this day; some hardly know their own needs; others hardly know Thee. I pray Thee to hear my prayer of faith on their behalf now, that they may know strength for weakness, hope for despair, and joy for sorrow. (*Silent prayer.*)

Now grant me to know more and more that if I do not have hold of Thee, I have nothing; and that if Thou dost not have hold of me, I am nothing. And may I live evermore to Thine honour and glory; for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

✠

EVENING THANKSGIVING

My Hope

"THERE is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines. . . . But I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord."

✠

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Silent Meditation

✠

My Song

"O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee:
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee:
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be."

✠

My Prayer

I give thanks to Thee, Lord, my Strength, that Thou art there to "plead my cause, that I may be bound up". I thank Thee, gracious Saviour, that even when I "have no healing medicines, Thou art able to restore health unto me, and heal me of my wounds". For the stirrings of my soul, and the stilling of my mind, and the soothing of my body, I offer Thee my praise this night, O God.

For the prayers of those who have been interceding for me;

For the privilege of praying for others as well as myself;

For the profusion of Thy Love for me;

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For the progress of my love for Thee—

I give Thee the thanksgiving of my heart, O Thou Healing Spirit!

Amen.

✠

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